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DOM JEAN MABILLON
AND THE
BENEDICTINE HISTORICAL SCHOOL
OF SAINT-MAUR

A DISSERTATION

*Submitted to the Faculty of Philosophy of the Catholic
University of America, in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy*

BY

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FOREWORD

The seventeenth century witnessed the foundation of two Catholic schools of history, which inaugurated modern historical scholarship. The first of these, the school of the Bollandists, composed of Belgian Jesuits, began about 1603 the work of collecting and publishing the records of the Saints, many of them heretofore existing only in manuscript. The first volume of the now famous *Acta Sanctorum*, appeared in 1643; the latest, the sixty-third of the series, was issued in 1925. The work, still incomplete, is being continued by the present members of the Bollandist society.

The second school, that of the Maurists, composed of French Benedictines, was founded in 1618. Whereas the Bollandists had limited themselves to hagiography, the Maurists extended their activities over a far wider range, including patrology, liturgy, history of the Councils, history of France. To the latter is due also the creation of the auxiliary sciences of history. Less fortunate than the Bollandists, the Maurists were victims of the French Revolution, which put an end to almost two centuries of fruitful activities.

The present work is concerned with the historical labors of Dom Jean Mabillon, the most outstanding representative of the Maurist school. It was undertaken at the suggestion of the Reverend Dr. Peter Guilday, Professor of Medieval Institutions at the Catholic University, under whose constant guidance and advice it was brought to completion. The author gratefully acknowledges his indebtedness to Doctor Guilday, to the Very Rev. Felix Fellner, O.S.B., Professor of History in St. Vincent's College, Beatty, Pa.; to the Reverend Dr. Boniface Stratemeier, O.P., Instructor of History at the Catholic University; to Miss Alice McShane, Assistant Librarian of the Catholic University, and to all others who have in any way given him assistance.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The present state of organized and scientific historical method traces its origin to the work of Dom Jean Mabillon (1632-1707), the most prominent figure in the Benedictine historical school of Saint-Maur. His celebrated treatise, *De re diplomatica* (1681), created the science of diplomatic criticism, which made possible thereafter the determination of the authenticity of historical documents. An art or science, until it has become independent, does not begin to draw up definite rules and principles to guide it; and history until the seventeenth century had been regarded as a branch of either literature, philosophy or rhetoric.¹ Some progress was made during the period of the humanists, when a new interest was shown in the texts of classical antiquity, but the humanists developed history more as literature than as a critical science.

The greatest scholar produced by Italian humanism was Flavius Blondus (1388-1463), who spent his entire life in a diligent study of Roman antiquities and the rise of medieval states. His most important work was a *History since the Decline of the Power of the Romans*. "He contributed more," says Fueter, "to our knowledge of the Middle Ages and of Roman antiquity than all the other humanists combined."² The heavy, labored style of Blondus was a decided disadvantage, although he was the most plagiarized of the humanists by subsequent writers, and, through this plagiarism, contributed indirectly to the increase of historical interest. Blondus was the real precursor of Mabillon.

Leonardo Bruni (1369-1444), in his *Twelve Books of Florentine History*, was the first to employ criticism in the use of documents. He was followed by Marcantonio Coccio (1436-1506), commonly known as Sabellicus, who wrote a world history

¹ Johnson, Allen, *The Historian and Historical Evidence*, New York, 1926, p. 101.

² Fueter, Ed., *Histoire de l'Historiographie Moderne*, trans., Paris, 1914.

called *Enneades*. The most distinguished critic of the humanists was Laurentius Valla (1407-1457), who not only wrote a *History of Ferdinand I of Aragon*, but also gained considerable fame by his criticism of the *Donation of Constantine*. Filippo Villani (1325-1405), who is credited with establishing historical biography among the humanists, wrote the lives of several famous Florentines. Political and civil historiography was capably handled by Machiavelli (1469-1527) from a philosophical point of view, and by Guicciardini (1483-1540) from a more properly historical one. Harry Elmer Barnes says that "Guicciardini reached the highest level to which post-classical historiography attained until the time of Mabillon."³

Swiss humanism was well represented in the person of Joachim von Watt, popularly known as Vadianus (1484-1551), whose principal work was a *History of Saint-Gall*. Considered superior to Blondus, Vadianus excelled in textual criticism, and achieved considerable success in determining the authenticity of documents. Beatus Rhenanus (1486-1547), a friend and associate of Erasmus, is the only outstanding historian among the German humanists. He was principally concerned with the early sources of German history. Spanish humanism produced Geronimo de Zurita (1512-1580), who closely approached the work of Blondus in historical criticism, when he wrote his *History of the Kingdom of Aragon*.

The religious upheaval of the sixteenth century checked the excellent progress already achieved by the humanists Blondus, Beatus Rhenanus, Vadianus and Zurita in historical criticism. Sectarian bias and animosity rather than any desire to find the truth was the principal factor in the renewed interest manifested in resurrecting and criticizing documents. The Protestant side was represented by Matthias Flaccius (1520-1575), who supervised the editing of the *Magdeburg Centuries*, a work undertaken to prove historically the Lutheran position. Owing to this partisan attitude and the desire to besmirch rather than to seek the truth, many facts were accepted as true, which were later proved to be preposterous. According to Fueter, the work of the Centuriators, who were inferior to the humanists both as critics and

³ Barnes, H. E., *History, Its Rise and Development*, in the 1922 edition of the *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. XIV.

as historians, marked a retrogression rather than an advance.⁴ To counteract the evil influence of the Centuriators, Cardinal Baronius (1538-1607), under the direction of St. Philip Neri, prepared his monumental collection, *Annales Ecclesiastici*. It was a scholarly production and exerted a powerful influence in the formation of later collections.

The bitter polemics occasioned by the religious disputes of the sixteenth century created a lively interest in the study of history, but they caused little advance in historical method and criticism. When calmness of judgment returned and sectarian violence subsided, the effort of scholars, both Catholic and Protestant, was directed toward the drawing up of critical principles necessary in establishing the authenticity of documents. Historical chronology was established by Joseph Justus Scaliger (1540-1609), in his *De emendatione temporum*, while the first attempt at producing an historical treatise on methodology was made by Jean Bodin (1530-1596) in his *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem*. Bodin, however, was interested in history only in so far as it assisted in the development of jurisprudence.⁵ In 1623 a work was published by C. J. Voss, entitled *Ars Historica*, in which the claims of history as an independent study were declared for the first time. The attitude of historians and their method of approach were deeply influenced by René Descartes' *Discours de la méthode*, published in 1637. From this time, the supremacy of reason and the immutability of the laws of nature were strongly stressed, and if carried to extremes could prove destructive in practise. These Cartesian principles greatly encouraged those who were already employed in subjecting historical documents to a rigorous criticism. Several years later Bossuet published his *Discours sur l'histoire universelle* (1681), in which his vigorous defense of an active Providence in human affairs succeeded in holding in check the general trend towards scepticism.

The Germans had begun a collection of historical sources about the year 1515 under the patronage of Emperor Maximilian I. This trend towards the investigation of national origins spread to France, where the first publication from this point of view appeared in 1574 in a work of François Hotman entitled, *Franco-*

⁴ Fueter, *op. cit.*, p. 311.

⁵ Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

Gallia. This was followed by similar works, such as the *Antiquités gauloises et françoises*, by Claude Fauchet (1579); the *Annales Francorum*, by Pierre Pithou (1588); the *Recherches de la France*, by Etienne Pasquier (1611). But the real beginning of critical source-collections in France was the work of André Duchesne (1584-1640), who has been called the "Father of the History of France."⁶ He compiled the *Historiae Normannorum scriptores antiqui* (1619), and the *Historiae Francorum Scriptores coetanei* (1636). Of no less value were the works of Charles du Fresne Ducange (1610-1688), who gave excellent critical editions of Villehardouin and Joinville; and of Etienne Baluze (1630-1718) with his *Capitularia regum Francorum*.

The work of collecting sources during the last half of the seventeenth century in France was performed almost entirely by the Benedictine monks of the Congregation of Saint-Maur. "No page in the annals of learning," says Professor Gooch, "is more glorious than that which records the labors of these humble but mighty scholars in an age when abstract Cartesianism was the dominant philosophy, when the State stood aloof and public interest was hardly born."⁷ The work of the Maurists differs from that of their predecessors in this, that great stress was laid by the Maurists on the development of the auxiliary sciences, such as diplomatic, chronology, palaeography, and epigraphy. Shotwell declares that "the place of this school in the history of history is without parallel. Few of those in the audiences of Molière, returning home under the gray walls of St. Germain-des-Prés, knew that within that monastery the men whose sleep they were disturbing were laying the basis for all scientific history; and few of the later historians of that age have been any wiser."⁸ This school of Saint-Maur, as exemplified in the work of its most prominent scholar and historian, Dom Jean Mabillon, forms the subject of the present study.

It is, therefore, the purpose of this essay to point out the distinctive contribution of Mabillon to the science of history.

⁶ Molinier, A., *Les Sources de l'Histoire de France*, Paris, 1904, Vol. V, p. clx.

⁷ Gooch, G. P., *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century*, London, 1920, p. 4.

⁸ Shotwell, J. T., *Introduction to the History of History*, New York, 1922.

With this end in view, those of his works have been selected for analysis in which he enunciated the principles of several auxiliary sciences. After a brief outline of the foundation and purpose of the Benedictine Congregation of Saint-Maur, the succeeding chapters of this essay discuss Mabillon's contribution to hagiography in his edition of the works of St. Bernard and the *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis S. Benedicti*; his contribution to diplomatic in his *De re diplomatica*; to liturgy from the results of discoveries made on literary journeys to Germany and Italy; to ecclesiastical studies in general in his *Traité des études monastiques*; and to archeology in his *Letter of Eusebius on Unknown Saints*.

CHAPTER II

THE CONGREGATION OF SAINT-MAUR

Monasticism, after a glorious career of a thousand years, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had fallen into a state of decadence and relaxation.¹ It had retained only a shadow of its former renown. The regulations and prescriptions of the Councils of Constance and of Trent did much to restore and re-invigorate monastic life and observance. As a result of these decrees of the Councils, reforms were successively instituted in several countries of Europe; the Congregation of St. Justina of Padua (to become later the Cassinese Congregation), the Bursfeld reform in Germany, and the Valladolid reform in Spain. But in France progress in this direction was very slow, and all attempts proved abortive, owing chiefly to the political and religious disorders of the time. The principal cause of monastic decadence had been due to the *commendam*, a nefarious practise initiated during feudal times, by which an extern, not a monk, often not an ecclesiastic, was nominated, usually by the king, to be abbot of a monastery, to manage the property and to administer the temporalities, but principally to draw the greater part of the revenues of the monastery.² In France this evil existed to an enormous extent. According to the terms of the Concordat of 1516, between Pope Leo X and Francis I, the nomination of abbots in most cases belonged to the prince. Even when a particular monastery enjoyed certain privileges of election, the sovereign could find means to impose his will. Examples of this abound. The Abbey of Saint-Denis was among those which the Concordat formally excluded from royal nomination. At the death of the abbot, Aymar de Gouffier, in 1529, Francis I informed the religious that he had no intention of interfering with their rights, but that they would please him if Cardinal de Bourbon were elected. The monks, on the contrary,

¹ Cf. Montalembert, *The Monks of the West*, Eng. trans., London, 1896. Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries*, London, 1902.

² Cf. Butler, *Benedictine Monachism*, London, 1919, p. 361.

saw fit to elect Jean Olivier. Francis, very much angered, immediately dismissed Olivier, and imposed the Cardinal de Bourbon on the Abbey. Existing under such conditions, it is little wonder that monasticism in France degenerated to such an extent that reform was well nigh impossible.

A salutary reform finally came to France indirectly by way of Lorraine. Pope Gregory XIV in 1591 appointed Cardinal Charles of Lorraine to investigate the condition of monasteries in the dioceses of Metz, Toul, and Verdun, and to attempt a reform. For this purpose the Cardinal convoked two general chapters, one in 1595, the second in 1597, but his efforts were without result. The history of monasticism shows that men are not accustomed to change their ways by official decrees; conversion is a slow, gradual process, brought about more effectively by example and leadership than by legislation.

In the old abbey of St. Vanne, in Verdun, Divine Providence was preparing a young religious, Dom Didier de la Cour, for the difficult task of reform. Coming from a little village near Verdun, called Montzeville, Didier had entered the community of St. Vanne as a choir novice in 1568, when only eighteen years of age. Deeply religious, and an ardent lover of monasticism, the young novice was disappointed with the life in St. Vanne, because the lax and careless observance of rule and constitutions offended his highly sensitive soul. While giving himself entirely to prayer and meditation, Didier bided his time until 1598, when he was elected prior. Approaching the bishop of Verdun, Prince Eric of Lorraine, who was also commendatory abbot of St. Vanne, Didier spoke of his plans for reform, and, on obtaining the bishop's approval, requested the prelate to secure from Rome a brief which would authorize the adoption of suitable measures for the complete restoration of discipline. Didier went about his delicate task with consummate tact and prudence. Permitting the older members of the community to continue as they had been doing, he focused all his attention on the novices. Primitive observance of the rule was introduced, and Dom Didier by his own example inspired in the younger members a love for the monastic state as its founder intended it to be. In a short time new postulants sought admittance, and some of the older members fell in with the new regime. Dom Didier had succeeded; the reform was established and produced its good

effects. A neighboring community, St. Hydulphe of Moyen-Moutier, requested Dom Didier to send a few of his professed religious to that monastery for the purpose of initiating a reform. The superiors of the two houses discussed a plan for the erection of a congregation.³ They communicated with Rome, and Pope Clement VIII in a brief dated April 7, 1604, solemnly approved the new reform, giving it canonical existence under the name of the Congregation of St. Vanne and St. Hydulphe. Constitutions were drawn up in which the interpretation given to the Rule by the Congregation of St. Justina of Padua was adopted. In a few years the new Congregation numbered more than forty monasteries, all of them practising the strict observance of the Rule of St. Benedict.

In Paris at this time another Benedictine was dreaming of the restoration of the family of St. Benedict in France. Dom Laurent Bénard, born at Nevers, in 1573, was Prior of the College of Cluny in Paris. Several times he had attempted a reform of his own community but with little or no success. He was about to resign his office as Prior when several incidents occurred which made him alter his decision. One of his former disciples, Anselm Rolle, had left the College of Cluny to join the new Congregation of St. Vanne. The letters which he sent back to Paris were enthusiastic about the Lorraine Congregation, and he urgently pleaded with Dom Bénard to join it. But another course suggested itself, and this Dom Bénard decided to follow. Writing to Dom Didier de la Cour, Dom Bénard explained his situation, and suggested that some religious be sent from St. Vanne to Paris. Dom Didier was at first reluctant, but after continued urging, he agreed to the plan. In the early part of 1613, the Lorraine group, led by Dom Bénard, signed over the College of Cluny to the Congregation of St. Vanne, and under the direction of its new masters, the reform made rapid progress. The example of the College of Cluny soon attracted others, and several monasteries requested to be enrolled. Among the first of these were the monasteries of St. Augustine de Limoges, St. Junien de Noaillé, and St. Faron de Meaux.

³ The Council of Trent had decreed that Benedictine houses exempt from episcopal jurisdiction should join together into congregations, thus definitely making the congregational system the law for Black Monks. Cf. Butler, *op. cit.*, p. 365.

With the spread of the reform in France, difficulties soon arose over nationality. Lorraine at that time did not belong to France, but was an independent duchy. To avoid friction, and also to facilitate acceptance of the reform by the French Benedictines, it was decided at St. Vanne that a separation was advisable. At the General Chapter of the Congregation, held in the monastery of St. Mansuy, in Toul, in the month of May, 1618, this measure was proposed by Dom Didier de la Cour. The chapter decided to create a distinct and independent Congregation in France with its own superiors, permitting those religious then in France to remain. It appointed Dom Bénard to carry out this important project. Setting out for Paris, Bénard, with the able assistance of Dom Anselm Rolle, Colomban Regnier, Maur Tassin, Martin Tesnières, Athanasius de Mongin, all religious of St. Vanne, began the formation of an independent French Congregation. He was supported by the Cardinals de Retz and de Sourdis, the Presidents of Parliament, Nicolai and Hennequin, and the Procurator-General of France, Molé. In the month of August, 1618, letters patent were received from King Louis XIII, and the first act of the new Congregation was the taking over of the celebrated monastery of Blanes-Manteaux in Paris, where the first General Chapter was celebrated on November 2, 1618. The Fathers agreed on the name of St. Maur, the legendary introducer of the Benedictine Rule into Gaul, as their patron. Dom Martin Tesnières was elected the first Superior with the title of President of the Congregation, and at the same time Prior of the abbey of Blanes-Manteaux. On May 17, 1621, the new Congregation received formal approbation from Pope Gregory XV; six years later this was confirmed by Pope Urban VIII.

Such was the institution of the celebrated Congregation of Saint-Maur. It spread rapidly all over France, and before the end of the seventeenth century numbered over one hundred and eighty monasteries, and two thousand five hundred members, divided into six provinces, France, Normandy, Brittany, Burgundy, Chezal-Benoît, and Gascony. To Dom Laurent Bénard is due the credit for bringing it into existence; it was in his mind that the plan of reform was conceived, in his College the first trial was made, and until his death in 1620 he was its father, defender, and model.

The enterprise was barely outlined at the death of Dom Bénédict. The work of organization and adjustment was accomplished by one of the most eminent men produced by the new reform, Dom Grégoire Tarrisse. Until recently there has been no account of this man's life, other than some notes and scattered references left by his contemporaries.⁴ A far-sighted organizer and a capable executive, his chief asset consisted in his knowledge of men and his ability to win them completely to himself. At the General Chapter held in Vendôme in April, 1630, Tarrisse was unanimously elected the first Superior General of the Congregation of St. Maur, and held the office until his death in 1648. Whatever fame and glory the Congregation later achieved was due principally to the genius of Dom Grégoire Tarrisse.

The process of forming and shaping a new organization is no easy task. It demands indomitable courage and patience; constitutions must be drawn up and a plan of action outlined; members must be instructed in the aim and purpose of the institution, and capably trained to carry out whatever work is assigned to them; opposition from within and without must be met and overcome. Although the Congregation of Saint-Maur was a branch of the great Benedictine family, the rôle it played during the century and a half of its existence was something unique in the history of monastic institutions. During the early period of Dom Tarrisse's term of office, a committee was appointed to draw up the constitutions. Tarrisse was chairman of this committee, and although it was under the supervision of the General Chapter, his influence was powerful. The Constitutions of St. Vanne and of St. Justina of Padua were used as guides,⁵ but Tarrisse and his associates departed from them in several important details. The manner of electing superiors, more conformable to the original idea of St. Benedict, and the importance accorded to study and intellectual work were the distinctive features of the Maurist Constitutions. The rule was a return not only to primitive observance and austerity,

⁴ Rousseau, F., *Dom Grégoire Tarrisse, Premier Supérieur Général de la Congrégation de Saint-Maur*, Paris, 1924. In the *Archives de la France Monastique*, Vol. V, pp. 51-89, Henri Stein gives several interesting letters of Tarrisse, and an unpublished memoir, written by Dom Luc d'Achery, entitled *Remarques faictes de quelques actions et parolles du R. P. Dom Grégoire Tarrisse* (1649).

⁵ Rousseau, *op. cit.*, p. 57-69.

but also to the rigors of the old constitutions of St. Benedict. To the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience was added a vow of perpetual abstinence. What made the new rule original, and drew down upon it the most violent attacks, was the provision that study and intellectual work were to be essential and integral parts of the obligations of those who entered the Congregation. It was not intended to change the end of the institute, namely, to work for the glory of God and the defense of truth, but to transform the mode of action. It was not an innovation, but rather an adaptation of what St. Benedict prescribed when he reserved certain hours for "lectio divina." Study took the place of manual labor, and the monks would now defend the cause of the Faith as usefully in writing books as the earlier monks had done in building roads or churches.⁶

One of the most difficult, as well as one of the most delicate, problems Tarrisse had to face was the desire of Cardinal Richelieu, at that time in the heyday of his power, to amalgamate all the Benedictines of France into one congregation with himself in supreme command.⁷ Aware of the wonderful work accomplished by the Benedictines in the past, he may have seen the possibility of a repetition of this, to the benefit of France, provided the several branches and congregations could be united to work in harmony. As Edmund Bishop intimates in explanation of Richelieu's action: "If anyone were to suggest that a great and united Benedictine congregation appeared to his (Richelieu's) mind, appealed to him as an item, a worthy item, in that great conception of his, the creation of a compact, self-contained, powerful France, I at least should not know, in view of the circumstances of the case, how to say nay to the proposition."⁸ Richelieu's plan consisted in uniting in one body the six hundred monasteries of Cluny, the one hundred and twenty priories of the dependency of Marmoutier, and the Congregations of Chezal-Benoit, Saint-Maur, and the Exempts, in a word, all the Black Monks in France. To obviate difficulties and op-

⁶ Butler, *op. cit.*, Chap. XX; Rousseau, *op. cit.*, Chap. VI.

⁷ On the relations of Richelieu with the Maurists, cf. Denis, *Le Cardinal de Richelieu et la réforme des monastères bénédictins*, Paris, 1912. Also *Revue des questions historiques*, Paris, Vol. XLIX, 1891.

⁸ Bishop, Edmund, *Liturgica Historica*, Oxford, 1918, p. 469.

position, it was proposed to permit each Congregation to keep its own Constitutions, general chapters, and superiors.

Tarrisse had been Superior General about a year when this news reached him. What especially annoyed him was the eagerness manifested by many of his monks in discussing the great possibilities of the plan. He immediately communicated with Père Joseph, Richelieu's *alter ego*, and after a long, tedious discussion, finally convinced the Capuchin that such a union would be folly. Tarrisse pictured vividly the consequences of such a heterogeneous agglomeration of communities without unity, without a common bond; it would surely be a repetition of the Tower of Babel, a confusion of languages. For some reason never definitely ascertained, but very probably due to Père Joseph's representations to Richelieu, the scheme was dropped.

No sooner was this crisis passed than another union, not so dangerous, but no less undesirable, was proposed. Richelieu was intent on the reform of Cluny. As early as 1622 he had himself nominated coadjutor to the regular abbot. Although Cluny had fallen far from its original high station it was still a name to conjure with. Any group of monasteries, with Cluny as the mother-house, assisted by the new reform, would certainly wield a powerful influence. Richelieu attempted such a union with the Congregation of St. Vanne, but when this plan fell through, he turned to Dom Tarrisse and the Congregation of St. Maur. After a long series of meetings held to discuss the proposed union, an agreement was finally drawn up and signed by the Cardinal on December 22, 1634. Letters patent were obtained from the King, and an effort made to procure papal approbation. The name of the new congregation was *Congregatio Sancti Benedicti, alias Cluniacensis et Sancti Mauri*. Pope Urban VIII seemed favorably inclined to the congregation, but no official decision was obtained, as Richelieu was losing favor at the papal court, and his conduct was under suspicion. His course of action in Germany had aroused doubts in Rome, and even in his campaign against the Huguenots, Richelieu was suspected of serving the King more than the Church. The new Congregation dragged on for some years without any constructive accomplishments. It seemed that Cluny refused to reform. At the death of Richelieu in 1642, Cluny became restless and a break was imminent; it soon came, in 1644. Tarrisse then obtained official approval

from the Regent and confirmation from Rome in a brief of Innocent X, on May 12, 1645.

Richelieu, as has been noted, had been keenly interested in monastic reform. His death vacated the nineteen abbacies-in-commendam which had been his, namely those of the three mother-houses, Cluny, Cîteaux, and Premontr , and sixteen other abbeys, chiefly Benedictine. Toward the end of his life he had manifested a particular interest in the Congregation of St. Maur. His relations with this Congregation have been variously judged. Some writers have severely criticized him⁹—as for instance, Dom M ge, one of the pioneers of Saint-Maur and a contemporary of Dom Tarrisse, who irreverently compares the Cardinal to the minister of Assuerus, the proud Aman. He accuses Richelieu of hating the Congregation of St. Maur because, like the just Mardochai, it refused to bend its knee to him. Others, like Dom Paul Denis¹⁰ and Edmund Bishop, praise the Cardinal's action as meritorious and deserving of the highest commendation. In spite of these conflicting opinions, it must be admitted that the rapid growth of the Congregation of Saint-Maur during its earliest years, when most of the Benedictine abbeys in France became affiliated with it, was due in great measure to the powerful influence of Richelieu and to his intense interest in its progress and development. Edmund Bishop believes that "Richelieu's relations with the Order of St. Benedict, when fairly looked into, and with full knowledge of details, will prove perhaps the highest tribute paid to the genius of the Benedictine Order in modern times; and the history of the Maurists a speaking and indubitable testimony to the sureness of instinct and correctness of judgment of the great statesman who stands in history as the maker of modern France."¹¹

While contending with these attacks on the unity of the Congregation, Dom Tarrisse was experiencing difficulty in inaugurating his program of studies. He had to struggle against the deeply rooted, stubborn prejudices of the older members. The principal office of the monk, he was told, is to pray. But his eloquence and powers of persuasion were sufficient to silence his

⁹ Rousseau, *op. cit.*, p. 102; Dom Bouilloureau, in *Archives de la France Monastique*, Vol. IX, preface.

¹⁰ Denis, Dom Paul, *op. cit.*

¹¹ Bishop, *op. cit.*, p. 473.

opponents, and to permit him to continue unmolested his work of formation. It would be of interest to know to what extent Dom Mabillon was later to be indebted to the arguments used by Tarrisse in making his program prevail, when he, too, was to be called on to defend monastic studies against the Abbot de Rancé.

The study of philosophy and theology, Scripture and canon law, was introduced by Tarrisse into the abbeys of the Congregation. The students were encouraged to study the writings of the Fathers, and also to acquire a knowledge of Hebrew and Greek. It had been decided by the Congregation to undertake works of a critical and historical character, especially new editions of the Fathers, and a history of the Order, and all superiors were requested to pay particular attention to the development and training of the students under their care. Students who manifested special talents in particular branches were to be encouraged and given every chance to develop. In a letter to Dom Tarbourier of Toulouse, dated September 2, 1631, Tarrisse requested a plan for a chronological history of the Order. Dom Anselm Michel was then sent on a tour of inspection to the libraries and archives of the Congregation for the purpose of examining their contents and reporting on the condition in which he found them. In November, 1647, and again in 1648, Tarrisse addressed a circular letter to the superiors of monasteries containing the general plan of what was to become a vast enterprise. Each prior was instructed to select from among his students the most capable, and these were to search in the archives and libraries for documents pertaining to a general history of the Order. This was the beginning of the *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti*, commenced by Dom Luc d'Achery and continued by Dom Jean Mabillon, reaching a total of nine folio volumes. Work on it was suspended following Mabillon's death, and was never resumed. This collection will be discussed at length in the following chapter.

Tarrisse then directed his attention to the libraries of the Congregation, particularly to the celebrated collection in the abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, at Paris, which had become the mother-house of the Congregation. This library was completely overhauled, and Dom Luc d'Achery was appointed to the arduous task of rearranging and classifying all the books,

documents, and manuscripts. D'Achery had taken a very important part in these early years of the formation of the Congregation. Born in Picardy in 1609, he embraced the new reform of St. Maur in the abbey of Vendôme on October 4, 1632.¹² His health was very delicate, and compelled him to spend a great part of forty-five years in the infirmary, but it did not prevent his editing and publishing many volumes of great literary and historical value. What Dom Grégoire Tarrisse was to the organization and material development of the new Congregation, Dom Luc d'Achery was to its literary and intellectual growth. He was an ardent lover of antiquity, and all of his time, day and night, was spent laboring in the galleries of the library. It was he who suggested to Tarrisse the project of collecting material for a history of the Order, and it was he who was principally responsible for carrying it through. The inspiration and ideal of the younger members, Dom Luc shares with Bénard and Tarrisse the honor of making possible the subsequent glory and renown which the Congregation of St. Maur achieved.

. This rapid sketch of the establishment and formative period of the celebrated body of Maurists has introduced us to a phenomenon unique in monastic history, a permanent, large-scale religious corporation, the members of which were to work together on vast literary productions through succeeding generations. The Bollandists, working at the same time in Belgium, are the nearest approach to the Maurist idea. But whereas the Bollandists never had more than five or six members at one time, the Congregation of St. Maur numbered about two thousand monks scattered over France in the various monasteries. By a sort of community of labor, all these monasteries were at the call of the Superior General in St. Germain-des-Prés. When a particular work was undertaken, the plan was dispatched to all the houses of the Congregation, announcing what was to be done and what material was needed. A careful research followed in each abbey. Manuscripts and charters were studied, compared, and collated. The results of each abbey's efforts were

¹² Tassin, in his *Histoire Littéraire de la Congrégation de Saint-Maur*, Paris, 1770, says (p. 104) that d'Achery was professed in 1632, at the age of 32. On the preceding page (103) he gives 1609 as the year of d'Achery's birth.

then sent to the headquarters in Paris, and placed in the hands of the one appointed to direct the enterprise. If some monk better acquainted with the particular undertaking was living in another monastery, he was at once summoned to Paris. This was possible with the Maurists because, contrary to an original and fundamental Benedictine principle by which a monk made a vow of stability, binding himself to remain for life at the abbey in which he was professed, their members were professed, not for a particular house, but for the whole Congregation.¹³ When a particular work finally reached the general public, it usually bore no other name than the familiar *labore et studio monachorum Sancti Benedicti Congregationis Sancti Mauri*. In this way the work of the individual would become the work of all, precluding any chance of rivalry or strife. Such was the secret of the Maurist achievement, a corporate work executed under skilled leadership.

To obtain a just estimate of the literary output of the Maurists during the century and a half of their existence, one needs but to glance at any of the several bibliographical lists that have been compiled. The latest catalogue, that of De Lama, and in his own opinion an incomplete one, comprises no less than seven hundred and ten numbers, each number indicating only the title of the work, and not the number of volumes.¹⁴ Some of the titles include five, ten, or even twenty volumes in folio. It will suffice to mention only a few of the best known: *Gallia Christiana*, the collection, *Historiens de France*, the *Historiens des Croisades*, the *Art de vérifier les dates*, the *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti*, the beautiful editions of the Latin and Greek Fathers, the collection of documents published under the names of *Spicilegium*, *Vetera Analecta*, and *Thesaurus anecdotorum*. And these are only a portion of what had been planned or was in course of preparation at the dispersal of the Congregation. The Manuscript Department of the Bibliothèque Nationale possesses hundreds of volumes of manuscript material left by the Maurists when their work was interrupted and finally brought to a close by the French Revolution. There are thirty-one volumes for the history of the Crusades, thirty-seven vol-

¹³ Cf. Butler, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

¹⁴ De Lama, Charles, *Bibliothèque des écrivains de la Congrégation de Saint-Maur*, Paris, 1882.

umes of Benedictine Antiquities, left by Dom Estiennot; fifty-two volumes for the literary history of France, eight volumes for the continuation of the *Acta Sanctorum*, fifty-four volumes of a *Monasticon Gallicanum* and a *Monasticon Benedictinum*, and seven hundred volumes of correspondence. The largest collection is the histories of the Provinces of France, which form over eight hundred volumes in folio. A small part of this material has been used at times by the various learned societies of France, such as the Institut, the Académie des Inscriptions, and the Ecole des Chartes. But the greater part of it remains untouched in the Bibliothèque Nationale, a lasting monument to the almost incredible activity of the monks of Saint-Maur.¹⁵

In the face of such a prodigious amount of work, is it any wonder that no one has yet attempted to write a complete history of the Maurists? The nearest approach to such a work is the *Histoire littéraire de la Congrégation de Saint-Maur*, by Dom Tassin (Paris, 1770), himself a Maurist, published about twenty years before the dispersal of the Congregation, in 1792. Tassin restricts himself to the purely literary side of the Maurist activities, giving an analysis of the more important works published to that date.¹⁶ What is needed is a detailed account of the establishment and material development of the Congregation, its influence on both Church and State, the Congregation as a spiritual factor in France, and its educational activities in the higher schools and colleges.¹⁷ Tassin suggests this in his preface, but after two hundred years no attempt has yet been made. If it ever does appear, the Congregation of Saint Maur will be viewed in a new light, and we shall be able to appreciate it not only as a potent factor in the literary world, but also as a

¹⁵ *La France chrétienne dans l'histoire*, edited by Msgr. Baudrillart, Paris, 1896, p. 418.

¹⁶ In the *Nouveau Supplément à l'histoire littéraire de la Congrégation de Saint-Maur*, Dom Berliere says: "There still remain in the departmental and municipal libraries too much material not yet analyzed, too much correspondence not yet catalogued, to think now of a definite recasting of the work of Dom Tassin. From the bibliographical point of view, Dom Tassin lacks precision in indicating the titles of works which he cites, and a careful revision will be necessary."

¹⁷ Bremond, Henri, *Histoire Littéraire du Sentiment Religieux en France*, Paris, 1922. Volumes two and six especially contain accounts of the interior life of several of the Maurists.

powerful influence on the religious and social life of seventeenth and eighteenth century France.

The most eminent product of the Congregation of St. Maur, the one man in whom all the high hopes and noble aspirations of Dom Grégoire Tarrisse and of the other early founders reached their culmination, was the celebrated Dom Jean Mabillon. Universally acclaimed as the Achilles of Benedictine achievement, Mabillon has to his credit some twenty folio volumes, and as many of lesser size, all of them monumental works of vast research and erudition. To understand and appreciate correctly the real significance and importance of the Maurist school, a critical study of Mabillon's works is essential, for he was typically and characteristically a Maurist, the goal and ambition of those who preceded him, the ideal and exemplar of those who came after him; in a word, he was the Maurist *par excellence*.

Of simple peasant origin, Mabillon was born on November 23, 1632, in the little village of Saint-Pierremont,¹⁸ situated on the frontiers of Champagne, about two leagues from Mousson on the Meuse, in the diocese of Rheims. His early education was confided to an uncle, a priest in a neighboring parish. When young Mabillon had made sufficient progress in his elementary studies, he was sent to the University of Rheims where he enrolled as a student in the Collège des Bons Enfants. There his simplicity and amiability endeared him to professors and students alike. On the completion of the six-year course required in those days for the humanities, Mabillon embarked on his clerical career by entering the diocesan seminary of Rheims, attached to the University, in the summer of 1650. The following year he received tonsure; and in 1652 the University conferred upon him the degree of Master of Arts.

An unpleasant incident surrounding the death of Mabillon's uncle, the village curé, who had had charge of his early training,

¹⁸ In the *Abrégé* of Mabillon, placed at the head of the fifth volume of the *Annales Ordinis Sancti Benedicti*, Dom Massuet puts Saint-Pierremont two leagues from Pont-à-Mousson, which is eighteen leagues from Mousson. This mistake was copied by Dom de Vic in his Latin translation of the life of Mabillon, written in French by Ruinart. M. de la Barre, of the Académie des Belles Lettres also fell into the same error in the new edition of the *Analecta* which he published in 1723. Cf. Dom Francois, *Bibliothèque Générale des écrivains de l'Ordre de S. Benoit*, Bouillon, 1777, Vol. 2, p. 55. Also, Jadart, in *Travaux de l'Académie de Reims*, Vol. LXIV, p. 57-58.

occurred while young Jean was attending school at Rheims and profoundly altered the whole course of his life. The facts were described some years later in a letter sent to Dom Ruinart while he was preparing a biography of Mabillon, and, although Ruinart suppressed the details, they were preserved in manuscript form. The letter is cited in Henri Jadart's account of Mabillon, and deserves notice because of the lasting impression the incident made on the young student.

L'oncle estoit un homme très dérégé dans sa conduite, beaucoup adonné au sexe; il entretenoit chez lui une damoiselle du pays, et en usoit comme s'il avoit esté son mary, ce qui lui attira quelques coups de bâtons de la part des frères qui estoient des gentilshommes qualifiés et officiers dans les armées. Ils le firent attacher par les doits du pied dans sa chambre, et le bastonnèrent tout nud si rudement qu'il en mourut peu de jours après des mauvais traitements qu'on luy fit. La damoiselle fut pareillement étrillée rudement. Le P. Mabillon en fut touché et voua dès lors qu'il ne seroit jamais prestre séculier; ce fut cette action qui le détermina à se jeter dans la suite parmi vous en 1653. Voilà ce que jay appris de notre illustre religieux.¹⁹

The ancient Benedictine abbey of Saint-Remy was not far from the diocesan seminary of Rheims. The Congregation of St. Maur had taken over the abbey in 1627, and at this period of Mabillon's life (1652), the abbey was at the height of its fervor. During his free moments Mabillon was accustomed to direct his steps to this beautiful edifice, a majestic reminder of an age long past. Its dark aisles and beautiful windows possessed a charm for him. He loved to assist at the services, especially the solemn chanting of the Divine Office. The peace and quiet of this place, as well as the exemplary lives of the religious, appealed strongly to him; so much so that he determined to seek admittance. After some delay his application was accepted, and, taking leave of his fellow-seminarians, Mabillon entered the monastery of Saint-Remy on August 29, 1653. A month later he was clothed in the habit of St. Benedict, which he was to wear affectionately until his death fifty-four years later.

At the end of a year of novitiate, Mabillon made his religious

¹⁹ Jadart, in *Archives de la France Monastique, (Mélanges et Documents)*, Vol. V, p. 11.

profession in the hands of Dom Vincent Marsolle, then prior of Saint-Remy. His superiors, recognizing his unusual mental qualities and his intense piety, retained him at Rheims to instruct the novices. During his stay in Rheims his health became seriously impaired, and he was almost continually subject to violent headaches. Brief visits to several neighboring abbeys failed to bring any relief. When a change of climate and complete rest were recommended by his physician, Mabillon was sent to Nogent, a small desolate abbey situated between Laon and Soissons. He regretted leaving Saint-Remy, and shed many bitter tears on his departure, but consoled himself at Nogent with researches in antiquity, unpaving almost the entire church in the hope of finding the tomb of Guibert, the most celebrated abbot of Nogent. From here he was sent to Corbie, in the diocese of Amiens. Though shorn of much of its former splendor, the abbey of Corbie was still a place of considerable renown, and possessed one of the finest libraries in France. Here Mabillon had many opportunities to gratify his ardor for study, but in order to prevent an excessive mental application, so deleterious to his health, he was successively assigned to the domestic duties of porter, procurator, and cellarer. On March 27, 1660, Mabillon was ordained priest in Amiens by Bishop François Faure, and desired nothing more than to devote the rest of his life to prayer and study.

After his ordination, his health gradually returned, although he never fully recovered, and it was considered safe to send him to Saint-Denis to resume his studies. He made the journey on foot in one day, a distance of nearly forty miles, arriving at this celebrated abbey July 3, 1663. It is interesting to note that every incident of his life seemed to be ordained to nourish and develop those tastes and pursuits which were subsequently to be productive of so much good for the Church. From Saint-Remy, where the kings of France were consecrated, Mabillon was now in Saint-Denis, where they were buried. The Prior of the abbey, knowing Mabillon's taste for the study of antiquity, placed him in charge of the abbey's museum, where many priceless treasures were preserved. An interesting anecdote is told in connection with the performance of his duties in the museum. One day, while displaying the treasures to some curious visitors, Mabillon either deliberately or accidentally broke a mirror

which was alleged to have belonged to the Roman poet, Virgil. He took advantage of the incident to seek release from an occupation which required a man less sincerely devoted to historical truth than he. Tassin labels the tale fictitious and unsupported by any proof, yet it reveals Mabillon's characteristic unswerving fidelity and devotion to truth.

At this time the prodigious labors undertaken years before by the superiors of the Maurists were well under way in the abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, the literary workshop of the Congregation in Paris. Dom Luc d'Achery, now aged and infirm, was casting about for a capable assistant who would succeed him. Mabillon was chosen to fill the post, and was sent to Paris in 1664, taking up his abode in that famous abbey with which his name is indissolubly connected; it was to be the principal scene of his long labors, over a period of forty-three years, until his death in 1707.

CHAPTER III

EARLY WORKS

The abbey of Saint Germain-des-Prés was the principal house of the Maurist Congregation, when Mabillon came to live there in 1664. The abbey had become the rendezvous of many scholars of high repute, some of them ecclesiastics, others laymen. On Sunday afternoons a number of these learned men would attend Vespers at the abbey, and then adjourn to the cell of Dom Luc d'Achery, where they would discuss the literary news of the day, recent publications or their own works. Anyone familiar with the intellectual life of the seventeenth century will recognize the names of Ducange, Baluze, d'Herbelot, Boileau, Fleury, Bignon, Cotelier, Renaudot, Tillemont, d'Herouval, Pagi, Valois,—to mention only a few of the best known. A delightful picture of these intellectual gatherings has been drawn by Prince Emmanuel de Broglie in his two volumes on *Mabillon et la Société de l'Abbaye de Saint-Germain-des-Prés* (1888), and a companion work on *Montfaucon*, published in 1891.

For several years d'Achery had been engaged on his celebrated work *Spicilegium veterum scriptorum*, a curious collection of interesting, unpublished documents that finally embraced thirteen large volumes. Mabillon had been called to Paris to assist d'Achery in arranging and coordinating his material, and preparing it for publication. "He discharged himself of this duty," says M. de Malan, "with zeal, and always treated his master with the utmost respect and attention. The aged d'Achery was feeble and infirm, and his assistant wished to leave him all the honor, and take upon himself all the labor. It was a similar feeling that made him, upon a later occasion, put d'Achery's name before his own in the title-page of all the volumes of his great work, the *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti*. Mabillon never did anything of consequence without taking his advice, and seldom passed a day without going several times to see him. He said Mass for him every morning in the infirmary to which d'Achery was confined for a long time, wrote his let-

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¹ Chavin de Malan, *Histoire de Mabillon et la Congrégation de Saint-
Maur*, Paris, 1813, p. 266.

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ters, and executed his commissions with all the simplicity and docility of a child."¹

The Congregation had very early in its career decided to devote its labors to a critical edition of the Fathers. Shortly after the invention of printing, there had been a veritable mania for printing everything—manuscripts, charters, unedited documents. Classic authors, such as Terence, Cicero, Sallust, Tacitus; then the Christian writers, e. g., Tertullian, Cyprian, and Justin: all were printed. Naturally there was neither sufficient time nor leisure to criticize the texts properly, to separate the true from the spurious. When calmer judgment prevailed, it was evident to scholars that a complete revision of all that had been printed would be necessary.

In the abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, Dom Claude Chantelou had been preparing an edition of the works of St. Bernard. Although an excellent edition had been printed in 1641 by Jacques Horstius, several serious defects and imperfections had been discovered which could be corrected by means of new documents now in the possession of the Maurists. In November, 1664, Dom Chantelou died, and Mabillon was charged with the edition. This was a singular honor for one so young and inexperienced, and shows the implicit confidence placed in him by his superiors. Mabillon put himself to work with all the energy and enthusiasm of youth. In less than three years his edition was ready for the printer, and appeared in 1667 in two volumes folio, and nine volumes octavo: *S. Bernardi Abbatis primi Clarevallensis opera omnia post Horstium denuo recognita*.

Mabillon's work showed an intense application and patient research. He completely rearranged the works of St. Bernard, dividing them first in regard to subject-matter, and then subdividing these chronologically. In several of the texts he corrected errors that had escaped the precision of Horstius and of other previous editors. The authentic works of St. Bernard were separated from those that were spurious or doubtful. Letters and treatises until then unpublished were added and explained with notes and commentaries. A life of St. Bernard was inserted that had been written by Alain, Bishop of Auxerre, one

¹ Chavin de Malan, *Histoire de Mabillon et la Congrégation de Saint-Maur*, Paris, 1813, p. 266.

of the Saint's disciples. The first volume contains an interesting table which Mabillon calls: *Chronologia Bernardina*, giving the most important events in each year of St. Bernard's life. In the prefaces to each volume, Mabillon explains obscure and curious points in the life and writings of St. Bernard, and in the history of the twelfth century.

When this new edition appeared, bearing Mabillon's name, it created an unusual sensation among the scholars of the period. The edition betrayed an uncommon skill in the handling of unedited texts, while the prefaces and commentaries bore witness to an intimate acquaintance with the history of the twelfth century. At Rome, the distinguished Abbot General of the Reformed Order of Citeaux, J. Bona, soon to be raised to the purple, after examining the work, wrote to Mabillon, congratulating him on his success and encouraging him to continue his studies. Bona spoke of Mabillon to the Pope, Alexander VII, so that Mabillon's reputation seemed assured. According to Haureau, the prefaces, commentaries, and notes of Mabillon's *St. Bernard* rank him among the savants of the century.² Although the edition of Mabillon may not satisfy the critical demands of our own day, it was then considered a masterpiece, showing considerable advance over all previous attempts. What especially attracted attention to the work was Mabillon's facility with Latin, occasioning the comment, many times repeated, that Mabillon wrote in Latin as Bossuet wrote in French. Although this is not entirely exact, according to Dom Cabrol, because Bossuet even in Latin is inimitable, yet Mabillon's style is certainly worthy of a place among the humanists.³

Seldom does it happen that a scholar achieves renown with his first work. Mabillon's initial effort had been a masterpiece. After the edition of St. Bernard, his name was often mentioned by the monks of the Congregation and his opinion sought by the members of the learned society who frequented the abbey. Mabillon published a second edition of St. Bernard in 1690, and was ready to give a third when he died. It was published in 1719 by Dom Massuet and Dom Tixier.

² *Nouvelle biographie générale du Dr. Hoefer*, Paris, 1860, Vol. XXXII, p. 446.

³ *Archives de la France Monastique*, Vol. V, p. 12.

While Mabillon was preparing his edition of the works of St. Bernard, Dom Luc d'Achery was collecting manuscripts and documents that would serve for a general history of the Benedictine Order. Such a work had been proposed by Dom Tarrisse in the early years of the Congregation, when a circular letter containing the plan of this vast enterprise had been sent to all the houses of the Congregation in 1647. D'Achery had been charged with the execution of the work, and during all these years had been patiently collecting and transcribing whatever was sent to Paris from the houses of the Congregation, or what he himself had discovered in the library of St. Germain-des-Prés. But d'Achery was a compiler, and required the assistance of an efficient collaborator. It was for this purpose that Mabillon had come to Paris. After completing the edition of St. Bernard, Mabillon now undertook the arduous task of arranging and coordinating the innumerable *acta* of the Benedictine saints that had been collected by d'Achery. Mabillon profited by the example of the Bollandists, then working on their collection unique in hagiographical literature, the *Acta Sanctorum*, which was mentioned in the beginning of this essay. The Benedictine work, however, was to be in reality a history of Europe for a thousand years, as contained in the various lives of Benedictine saints.

In less than a year Mabillon published the first volume of the *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti in saeculorum classes distributa* (1668). The remaining volumes followed one another until the ninth, and last, was published in 1701. They contain all the "Lives" of Benedictine saints from the institution of the Order until the twelfth century. The prefaces, commentaries, and notes are the distinct work of Mabillon, and in them he explains the principal details of each century, establishes the correct chronology of the popes and kings, and discusses interesting questions of ecclesiastical and monastic discipline. These prefaces received the universal approval of scholars and confirmed their previous judgment of Mabillon's excellent critical ability. Printed separately in a quarto volume of over six hundred pages, they deserve here more than a passing notice.* The following analysis will give some notion of their contents, as well

*J. Mabillonii Praefationes Actis Sanctorum Ordinis S. Benedicti, Rouen, 1732.

as an idea of Mabillon's profound knowledge of the early part of the Middle Ages.⁵

In the preface to the first volume, containing the *Acta* of the saints of the first Benedictine Century, Mabillon treats of the origin and progress of monasticism in the West before the time of St. Benedict. The date of the holy patriarch's death had never been definitely established. After thoroughly examining the question, Mabillon places it on the twelfth day before the calends of April, *i. e.*, March 21, in the year 543, the Saturday before Passion Sunday. In discussing the rule of St. Benedict, Mabillon shows the existence at this time of several monasteries of women following the rule, and among them was the sister of St. Benedict, St. Scholastica. During the sixth century, the rule was carried to Sicily by St. Placidus, to Gaul by St. Maur, and to Spain by St. Donatus. Mabillon then refutes the opinion of Baronius, who maintained that St. Gregory the Great, St. Augustine and his companions in England, did not follow the rule of St. Benedict. The preface of the first volume, like the others, is brought to a close after several pages of ecclesiastical observations, based for the most part on the *Acta* contained in the volume itself. There are some curious remarks concerning the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, which was then administered before Viaticum, and many times during the same illness. It was not until the thirteenth century that this order was reversed, and Extreme Unction was given after Holy Viaticum. This change was the result of a popular error founded on the belief that after the reception of Extreme Unction, should the person recover, he was no longer permitted to eat meat, and if he was married, he could no longer exercise his marital rights. There were many other interesting conditions then prevalent, such as, laymen were forbidden to sing in churches, women were forbidden to enter the churches of monks, while deacons were permitted to wear the stole continually the first year of their ordination.

The second Benedictine Century was published in 1669, and in the preface, Mabillon discusses the rule and institute of St. Columbanus, and the introduction of monasticism into Belgium by St. Amandus. The ecclesiastical observations concern the

⁵ Cf. Tassin, *Histoire littéraire de la Congrégation de Saint-Maur*, Paris, 1770, pp. 221-236; also Le Cerf, *Bibliothèque historique et critique des auteurs de la Congrégation de Saint-Maur*, Hague, 1726, pp. 217-242.

celebration of Mass during the seventh century. Some priests said Mass every day, others several times on the same day, like Pope St. Leo, who celebrated as often as seven times on one day. Bishops and priests were sometimes content with communicating. The solemnity of Sunday commenced on Saturday after None. On Sundays and feast-days, the faithful assisted at Matins, and attended Mass fasting. Several examples of the Sacrament of Confirmation and of public penance are to be found in this century. Those guilty of homicide were condemned to long pilgrimages wearing an iron band around their bodies. Bishops who had fallen into sins of the flesh were deposed without hope of ever being reinstated. Following these remarks on points of discipline, Mabillon has several pages of historical and chronological observations in which he fixes the dates of kings and popes, and corrects the chronology of Baronius.

The third Benedictine Century, published in 1672, contains the *Acta* of the saints who lived from the year 700 to 800. It is divided into two volumes, each having a separate preface. In the first volume, Mabillon speaks of the schism which divided Scotland and Ireland for so long a time over the celebration of Easter. Concerning the quarrel between Irish and Roman priests on the tonsure, Mabillon describes the different kinds of tonsure then in use, both among laymen, clerics and monks. He then passes to the conversion of Germany and the peoples of the north by the monks of St. Benedict, who built many cathedrals and monasteries. Several cathedrals were at that time in the care of monks, such as Canterbury in England, and St. Peter's and the Lateran in Rome. The latter was again possessed by the Benedictines under Pope Innocent II in the twelfth century. Schools were maintained in Benedictine monasteries for others besides monks, although the students and monks had no communication with each other. The last part of the preface contains the customary ecclesiastical, monastic and historical observations. Mabillon maintains that unleavened bread was in use in the Latin Church before the schism of Photius. A custom then existed of administering Holy Communion to lay people under both species, and this continued until the end of the twelfth century. Mabillon then proves against the opinion of Dailé the antiquity and necessity of confession in order to obtain

pardon for sins.⁶ Particular confession was often made in the presence of several priests, who then *en masse* gave absolution to the penitent. It was common even at that time for persons of prominence to have a particular confessor. A few observations follow on the Gallican Church, the introduction of organs and Chapters of Canons in Cathedral Churches. The rest of the preface is a reply to the criticism of P. le Cointe of the Oratory on the introduction of the Benedictine rule into Gaul; Mabillon refers him to the preface of the second Benedictine Century in which he had explained in detail this introduction.

The *Acta* of the fourth Benedictine Century, from 800 to 900, are in two parts. The first was published in 1677, and the second in 1680. Mabillon was assisted in compiling these volumes by Dom Michel Germain, but the two prefaces are from the pen of Mabillon. The preface of the first part treats of the many heresies that were taught in this century—Adoptionism, the procession of the Holy Ghost, and the worship of images. After these ecclesiastical disputes, Mabillon describes the monastic state as it was in the ninth century. The Council of Aix-la-Chapelle in 817, did not intend the promulgation of the rule of St. Benedict, but its restoration. The decline of monastic discipline under Charlemagne was due to several causes—the excessive severity of some abbots, the over-indulgence of others, and the cupidity of seculars. St. Benedict of Aniane was principally responsible for the renewal of discipline. It was at his solicitation that the Emperor Louis the Fair convoked all the abbots of the Order in the Council of Aix-la-Chapelle, where statutes were drawn up for the uniformity of monastic observance. The abbots were ordered on their return to have the rule of St. Benedict read in their communities, to celebrate the Divine Office as the rule prescribes, to give to their monks the necessities of life, and to eat with them in the refectory. The use of meat was forbidden except to the sick and infirm. Fowl was permitted on Christmas and Easter, and excepting at certain times the fat of pork could be used in seasoning the food. Mabillon then examines the weight of a pound of bread per-

⁶ Jean Daillé, a prominent French Protestant scholar of the seventeenth century, who wrote many works of a theological nature, principally the *De poenis et satisfactionibus humanis*, Amsterdam, 1649; and *De confirmatione et extrema unctione*, Geneva, 1669.

mitted by St. Benedict in the rule, and by the Fathers of Aix-la-Chapelle. He maintains that this pound was of fifteen or sixteen ounces. As to the "hemina" (half-pint) of wine allowed by St. Benedict, it was probably eighteen ounces, and consequently more than the "demi-setier" (half-pint) of Paris, which contained only ten ounces. Dom Lancelot of the abbey of St. Cyran had previously written a dissertation on this subject in which he maintained that the "hemina" was similar to the "demi-setier," that is ten ounces, an opinion which Mabillon here refutes. Ten years later Dom Lancelot printed a reply in which he increased the "hemina" two ounces, but was very bitter and caustic against Mabillon. He was refuted later by Dom Martène in his *Commentary* on the rule of St. Benedict, and also by M. Pelletier of Rouen, who proved that the "hemina" of St. Benedict was no other than the military "hemina" of the Romans, containing twenty ounces. Mabillon next describes the revival of letters and the establishment of schools in Paris by the Emperor Charlemagne. This is followed by an examination of the reign of Dagobert I and the return of Dagobert II to Austrasia. This preface containing 154 pages in folio, received considerable praise all over Europe, and increased Mabillon's reputation as a scholar of high repute.

The second part of the *Acta* of the fourth Benedictine Century embraces the last forty-five years of the ninth century. The preface begins with the Eucharistic controversies between Pascasius Radbert, abbot of Corbie, and Bertram or Ratram, one of Radbert's religious. This dispute concerned the reality of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, and whether it was the same body as was born of the Virgin Mary. Pascasius invoked the authority of St. Ambrose. Mabillon adds to this the testimony of St. Ignatius Martyr, St. Chrysostom, St. Augustine, and St. Gregory of Nyssa. Mabillon then criticizes the writings of John Scotus Erigena, and proves from the testimony of many authors that this writer was extremely rash in his books and taught several Calvinistic errors on the Eucharist. From these disputes Mabillon proceeds to the schism of the Greeks caused by Photius. Ratram, a learned scholar of that period, had written an excellent work against the Greeks, which was divided into four books. This work was prepared and edited by Dom Luc d'Achery, appearing in the second tome of the *Spicilegium*.

Mabillon concludes this preface with several interesting observations on the approbation of books by the Sovereign Pontiff, the obligation of monks, elected to the episcopate, of keeping the monastic habit, and all observances that were compatible with the episcopal functions, fasting and abstinence. Several curious customs of this period are then described, e.g., the washing of one's body before communicating; baptism by infusion; receiving the monastic habit before expiring. The abbots then had the power of inflicting excommunication, of giving the tonsure, and of consecrating churches.

The *Acta* of the fifth Benedictine Century, the tenth century in the Church, are contained in a single volume which was published in 1685. Mabillon frankly admits that this century, the object of Protestant attack, certainly had its vices and disorders, but it also had its virtues and advantages. It produced many great men both in holiness and in science, men who preserved in the Church purity of morals and Catholic tradition. Mabillon described the state of the Church in Italy at this time without concealing the abuses and disorders that existed even in regard to the Holy See itself. Nevertheless there were several popes of a very holy life. How otherwise explain the fact that there were men capable of preserving the precious deposit of holy doctrine, and sufficiently zealous in preventing alterations by the introduction of profane novelties? From Italy Mabillon passes to other European countries, showing the same resources of the Church. He then describes the origin and progress of the Congregation of Cluny, established in 910, which sent bands of holy monks into all parts of Europe.

The ecclesiastical, monastic, and historical observations concern the canonization of saints, in which he distinguishes three different periods, or three successive ways of canonizing saints: first, from the beginning of the Church to the tenth century, the power was in the bishop with the consent of the people; second, from the tenth century to Pope Alexander III (1170), the bishops canonized with the consent of the Pope; third, from Alexander III, the Popes reserved to themselves the absolute power of canonizing. Indulgences are next considered, followed by a description of the devotion to the Blessed Virgin, which spread rapidly in this century. Saturday was consecrated to her memory by the recitation of the Little Office. Mabillon also speaks of the

Rosary and the Angelic salutation. He observes that when young monks were sent for Ordination, they were not ordained "sub titulo paupertatis," like the mendicants, but "sub titulo monasterii talis." Finally he discusses the reign of Louis d'Outremer, and the benefits bestowed on the Benedictines by Hugh Capet and Robert, his son. As soon as Hugh Capet ascended the throne, he granted to all monasteries of his kingdom the right to elect their abbots.

The *Acta* of the sixth Benedictine Century are divided into two parts, appearing together in two volumes in 1701. Dom Thierry Ruinart had the principal part in the edition of both tomes. He is also the author of the notes and observations in the body of the work, but the prefaces were written by Mabillon. The preface of the first part begins with some observations on the flourishing state of the Order in the eleventh century, the propagation of the Order in the Orient and in other regions, and the reformation of the English monasteries. A controversy arose during this century over the profession of obedience required of abbots by the bishops. Mabillon then describes the mitre and pontifical vestments granted to abbots, and finally a custom then existing of offering children in monasteries. He justifies the use of the "discipline," and cites the testimony of Fastide, third abbot of Clairvaux, reproaching an abbot of his Order, whose monks were praying and taking the "discipline" for their sins, while he was enjoying himself during the hours of the night. Mabillon ends the preface by establishing the time of Hugh Capet's death in 996, the divorce of King Robert from Bertha before the year 1004, and the marriage of this prince with Constance before 1007.

The preface of the second tome of the sixth Benedictine Century contains many important observations, which are divided into twelve articles. In the first, Mabillon treats of the origin and progress of the Schism of the Greeks, caused by Michael Cerularius. He then refutes the fable of the Popess Joan, which was not known in the middle of the twelfth century, and only began to circulate towards the end of the following century. Mabillon then considers the heresy of Berengarius, referring to his condemnation in the different councils and his many professions of faith. Mabillon praises Pope Gregory VII for his zeal in extirpating simony and in reestablishing clerical celibacy.

Finally he discusses the various congregations and monastic orders instituted in the eleventh century. St. Romuald established the Congregation of the Camaldulians or Camaldulense in the year 1023. St. John Gualbert, desiring to lead a more regular life, returned to Vallombrosa, and there erected the foundations of a new Congregation, the Vallombrosians. Stephen, a gentleman of Auvergne, instituted the Order of Grammont in 1076, observing the rule of a Benedictine Congregation he had seen in Calabria. St. Bruno, Canon and theologian at Rheims, founded the Order of Chartreuse, or Carthusians in 1084. Their first rule was that of St. Benedict. Previous to this century, *frères convers* and *frères laïcs* were unknown. In this century also arose the *données* and *oblats*. The *frères laïcs* made solemn profession like other monks, and Mabillon insists they should be considered as real religious.

This preface is concluded with several observations on particular customs of the Church and of monasteries. The custom of changing the names of Popes on their elevation to the pontificate became permanent in this century. Toward the end of the century the *chorepiscopi* were abolished. The Council of Compostella in 1056 ordained that priests should celebrate Mass every day. This was not observed in the Orders of Cluny or Cîteaux. In the Order of Chartreuse, Mass was said only on Sundays and feasts. In some particular places special Masses were prescribed for ferials: the Mass of the Angels for Monday, of the Holy Cross for Wednesday, and of the Blessed Virgin for Saturday. In this century Extreme Unction was administered to the sick before Viaticum; although Viaticum was given under both species, there are examples at this period of Communion under one species.

The nine volumes of the *Acta Sanctorum*, the prefaces of which have just been summarized, were to be followed by a tenth, which in 1709 was almost ready to be printed, when Dom Ruinart died. This tenth volume, which would have completed the collection of the *Lives of the Benedictine Saints*, has remained in manuscript and is at present in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

In preparing this work, Mabillon had been compelled to omit the names of many saints, who were usually attributed to the Benedictine family, but whom Mabillon found on examination

not deserving of that honor. Some were not only not Benedictines, but legendary figures for whose existence there was no sufficient proof. When the first volume appeared in 1668, a storm of protest arose, especially within the Order. Mabillon was violently attacked, and accused of being an impious prevaricator and traitor. Dom Mège and Dom Bastide formally protested to the superiors, and demanded Mabillon's immediate punishment. In a letter to Dom Bastide, December 16, 1668, Mabillon explains why he was obliged to omit certain names.⁷ The letter is the essence of wisdom, humility and moderation. It is no more permissible, says Mabillon, for a religious to lie in order to glorify his Order, than it is for one to appropriate the goods of another, and that, if individual pride is blameworthy, collective pride is no less so.

The opponents of Mabillon became more bitter and venomous, until a formal protest against the continuation of the *Acta* was drawn up by Dom Bastide and submitted to the General Chapter of 1677. This very important document is missing in the collections of both the Bibliothèque Nationale and the Archives Nationales. The original draft of Dom Bastide's protest had been given to M. Leopold Delisle by one of his associates at the Ecole des Chartes, Etienne Charavay, for the purpose of publishing it with a commentary. Through some oversight it was mislaid. Later in rearranging the papers of his wife, Delisle discovered a copy of the draft that had evidently been made by Madame Delisle. Taking advantage of the second centenary celebration of Mabillon's death, M. Delisle submitted it to the printer with a few notes and commentary, and it appeared in the *Mélanges et Documents*, a work published in commemoration of the Second Centenary.⁸ This protest of Bastide is certainly a most virulent attack on Mabillon and his method, and shows to what extent a man can be carried away by passion and prejudice.

Mabillon was compelled to appear before the General Chapter in vindication of his conduct, and he did this with dignity and moderation. His defense, a lengthy "mémoire justificatif," is

⁷ This letter is given in the *Oeuvres posthumes de Mabillon*, Paris, 1724, Vol. I, p. 433; also in Chavin de Malan, *op. cit.*, pp. 271-277.

⁸ Also the *Archives de la France Monastique*, Vol. V, 1908.

an admirable document, and reveals the hand of a master in historical criticism. The following is a striking passage:

Nous ne devons pas avoir plus d'attache à notre ordre qu'à la foi catholique. Or saint Augustin fait voir excellemment bien, et c'est la doctrine de l'Eglise, que nous ne devons point commettre la moindre faute contra la vérité et contre la sincérité, quand il serait question de convertir par ce moyen les infidèles et les hérétiques. Car, comme dit fort bien ce grand homme, outre l'outrage qu'on ferait à la vérité, si l'on venait à decouvrir notre mauvaise foi, tout le bien que nous aurions pensé établir sur ce faux principe s'en irait en ruine. Que si cela n'est pas permis dans le discours, il l'est encore bien moins dans les écrits que l'on donne au public avec préméditation et qui doivent demeurer dans la postérité.⁹

The General Chapter, persuaded by Mabillon's eloquent defense of the lawfulness and integrity of his conduct, permitted him to continue his work on the remaining volumes of the *Acta Sanctorum*.

In his profession of faith, which Dom Claude de Vic inserted in his Latin translation of the biography of Mabillon, written in French by Dom Ruinart, Mabillon enunciated the duties of an historian, such as he understood them. Because this profession of faith, M. Delisle says, is too little known today, he reproduced it in his article on Mabillon in the *Mélanges et Documents*, since it gives an adequate idea of Mabillon's literary probity:

As the desire for fairness should be the first requisite of a judge, so the sincere and accurate investigation of things past should be the first duty of the historian. A judge is a public personage, instituted to give to every man his due; before his tribunal stand all men in those matters on which he pronounces sentence, and therefore he becomes guilty of the greatest of crimes when he does not, to the best of his ability, render to every man his due. That is also the duty of the historian, who is likewise a public personage, since to his judgment is entrusted the examination of things past. As all men are not of themselves able to investigate

⁹ The entire memoir is given by Dom Paul Denis, in the *Revue Mabillon*, Vol. VI, pp. 1-64. In the *Archives des missions scientifiques*, t. 6, p. 358-363. M. Alphonse Dantier gives the first paragraph and conclusion of Mabillon's reply to Dom Bastide with a short commentary.

these past happenings, many must follow the verdict of the historian; and thus if he makes no attempt to render a just decision, he deceives many. Furthermore, it is not enough that he have a love for the study of things past, unless he also possess that candor of mind which will make him tell openly and frankly what he knows to be true. If lying is on no account permitted to the ordinary Christian, how much more so is it forbidden to those who have professed the religious life, particularly since a lie is so harmful, nay, fatal to many. The result cannot be other than that the lies of the historian are turned to the damage of many, who, while giving credence to his words, are shamefully deceived when they embrace error instead of truth. Not slight, then, is the sin of him who drags others into error with himself. He must, if he be candid, and devoid of all partiality, relate the true as true, the false as false, the doubtful as doubtful, and not conceal that which may be favorable or damaging to both sides. Piety must not be separated from truth; and piety, if it be genuine, must never oppose truth.

For this reason I would be doing wrongly to propose false ornaments of the Order as true, or doubtful ones as certain. Such a course is repugnant, alike to truth, to the service of which monks, as disciples of Christ, Who is Truth, should be dedicated; to religious sincerity, which men of the world demand of us, and to that humility and modesty which should be special adornments of religious. The portrayal of borrowed virtue and renown avails nothing but to nourish vanity; and it does the greatest possible harm to the Order, producing in its adversaries a very low estimate of it. Nothing detracts so much from the trustworthiness of an historian as his adducing, through his own excessive partiality, the false instead of the true, or uncertainty in place of certitude; and indeed, when anyone is convicted of a lapse from the truth, then does he offer to his opponents occasion to reject whatever things are certain, or at least to view them with suspicion.¹⁰

This method Mabillon faithfully followed throughout his entire career, maintaining at all times without flinching the inalienable rights of truth. In the preface to his celebrated treatise on Diplomatic, Mabillon concludes with this pertinent phrase, which should serve as the emblem of science itself: *Scientia veri justique viadex*. His strict interpretation of these rules of historical criticism involved him in many bitter contests, the details of which will be discussed in the following chapters:

¹⁰ See Appendix II, for the Latin text.

CHAPTER IV

THE DE RE DIPLOMATICA

The most important contribution of Mabillon to historical science was a work to which he gave the modest title *De Re Diplomatica*. In this treatise Mabillon laid the foundation for a new, and, at the time, sorely needed auxiliary science of history, diplomatic. Of his many works, this was the masterpiece. Had he done nothing else but formulate the rules of diplomatic criticism, he would have been singled out by posterity as worthy of everlasting renown.

Diplomatic is a science which has for its object a critical study of documents in order to determine their historical value. Documents are valuable as historical evidence only when they can be proved to be authentic. With the aid of diplomatic, the historian determines whether a document is true or false, whether it can be accepted as evidence, or must be rejected as a forgery. The importance and practical value of such a science can easily be recognized.

The word *diploma* from which the science takes its name is from a Greek word, meaning *to double*, and in early times referred to a passport, or license to travel by post. It comprised two sheets of metal which were joined together like the leaves of a book. Later it came to signify the official discharge of soldiers who had served their time, and finally to denote any imperial grant of privileges. In the period of the Renaissance *diploma* was adopted pedantically by the humanists to signify all important deeds and acts of sovereign authority, privileges granted by kings or other great personages. Later the word was accepted by historians generally and used to denote all important documents belonging to the Middle Ages, especially charters, treaties, contracts and registers, emanating from the chanceries of popes, emperors, and kings.

In the seventeenth century when recourse to diplomatic material was almost indispensable in obtaining a true perspective of the past, the historian encountered many difficulties in deter-

mining the genuineness and the real value of a document. As yet there was no definitive science or accepted code of rules at his command whereby he might establish the authenticity and veracity of diplomatic sources. He had to be guided solely by personal experience and by rules which he was obliged to create for himself. Owing to the lack of such an approved and accepted science, numerous disputes arose concerning the authenticity of diplomas and charters. In Germany there was question of the sovereignty and mediatization of cities and abbeys following the Thirty Years' War and the Peace of Westphalia. One instance was the quarrel for sovereignty between the city and abbey of Lindau, based on the authority of a forged diploma. The city requested Professor Hermann Conring of the University of Helmstadt to examine the document. His was the first attempt to formulate a general principle of criticism, comparing suspected documents with authentic ones emanating from the same authority. In France similar disputes arose in regard to genealogies. These "Diplomatic Wars" do not enter into the present subject except in so far as they tend to show the confused state of historical science before the work of Mabillon. They have been described in detail by such leading modern diplomatists as Bresslau, Sickel, Giry, and Prou.

Before considering the establishment of the science of diplomatic, mention must be made of the work of the celebrated Ducange, a French scholar and an intimate acquaintance of Mabillon. His *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis* proved an invaluable aid to scholars in transcribing medieval diplomas and charters. It was the result of an intense study and comparison of a vast number of documents, for the most part unedited, and it explained the meaning of words and phrases employed in medieval Latin.

Mabillon's celebrated treatise was called forth in defense of some Benedictine charters, the authenticity of which had been impugned. The distinguished Bollandist, Daniel Papebroch, and his associates on the *Acta Sanctorum* had long felt the need of determined rules to be employed in testing the truth and falsity of documents. During a trip to Germany in 1668, Papebroch was detained for over a month at Luxembourg, owing to the illness of his fellow-worker, Henschenius. Taking advantage of this delay, Papebroch examined a supposed charter of Dagobert

I, preserved in the monastery of St. Irmine of Treves, and compared it with some diplomas in the monastery of St. Maximin. Believing that he could establish certain rules to be applied to all diplomas, he decided to formulate general principles for this new science. Receiving the encouragement of Pope Alexander VII, an ardent supporter of the Bollandist enterprise, Papebroch devoted the next few years to the task. His treatise appeared in 1675 as a preface to the second tome of the *Acta Sanctorum* for April, entitled "Propylaeum antiquarium circa veri ac falsi discrimen in vetustis membranis."

To Papebroch must go the credit of having been the first to attempt to draw up a set of rules for the criticism of charters. Mabillon attributes this to him in these words: "Nullus ad hoc usque tempus peculiari tractatione rem aggressus fuerat ante Daniele[m] Papebrochium."¹ Unfortunately Papebroch was less acquainted with charters and diplomas than he was with libraries and manuscripts. Besides a few charters of Treves, he had not a sufficient number of documents at his disposal to warrant the preparation of such a work. His observations in most cases were correct and judicious, but his conclusions were extreme and unfounded. Far from discovering general rules or norms, Papebroch raised wholesale suspicions about all early charters and diplomas. He saw forgeries everywhere, and concluded, with the Englishman, John Marsham, that the older a diploma was, the more it was to be suspected.² He vigorously attacked the authenticity of documents preserved in monastic archives, especially those of the Benedictines, and, following the opinion of Jean de Launoi, he condemned the beautiful series of Merovingian diplomas preserved in the Benedictine abbey of Saint-Denis. This series had been published by Doublet in his history of the abbey.³ They formed the oldest title-deeds of the Benedictine Order and had never before been questioned. The attempt of Papebroch can in no way be considered as a diplomatic treatise, owing to the insufficiency of his researches and the impracticability of the rules he laid down. Although he condemned many documents

¹ *De Re Diplomatica*, I, 1, num. 2, p. 3.

² "Tanto minus eis adhibendum fidei quanto plus prae se ferunt antiquitatis." Marsham gave this opinion in the preface which he wrote for the *Monasticon Anglicanum* of Dugdale, in 1655.

³ *Histoire de l'abbaye de Saint-Denis en France*, Paris, 1625.

that were undeniably false, he included in that condemnation many that were authentic, as for instance the original diploma of Clovis II for the abbey of Saint-Denys. What Papebroch did accomplish was to furnish the occasion for Mabillon's masterly treatise on diplomatic.⁴

It was but natural that the appearance of the *Propylaeum* of Papebroch, with its attack on the Benedictine archives, should arouse the Maurist Congregation. A defense was necessary and Mabillon was charged to prepare it. At the time he was working on the *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti*, collaborating with Dom Luc d'Achery on the *Spicilegium*, and editing the *Vetera Analecta*. These immense collections demanded most of his time but they did not prevent him from preparing an able defense of diplomas and charters. An intimate friendship had existed for some time between Mabillon and Papebroch; their relations had been cordial and their correspondence frequent. As early as 1671 Papebroch had written to thank Mabillon for advice and assistance.⁵

For six years after being charged to reply to the *Propylaeum*, Mabillon made a thorough study of the subject. He visited the Abbey of Saint-Denys, travelled over Champagne and Lorraine, visited the principal abbeys, examining charters and diplomas, and collecting a vast number of documents. When the object of his work became known, every assistance was afforded him. Members of the Congregation willingly placed themselves at his disposal. Dom Claude Estiennot gave freely of his wide experience and intimate acquaintance with all the leading archives of France. Vion d'Hérouval permitted him to draw from his vast collection of ecclesiastical documents, Baluze offered his notes and observations, and the president, de Harlay, loaned his manuscripts. The eminent Ducange gave advice and direction, cooperating with Mabillon as if the work were his own. The energetic Dom Germain labored with his accustomed vigor, accompanying Mabillon on the journeys he made. The following letter to a young Benedictine, Dom Thierry Ruinart, who was

⁴ For a criticism of Papebroch see Giry, *Manuel de Diplomatique*, Paris, 1894, p. 61; *Archives de la France Monastique*, Vol. V (*Mélanges et Documents*), art. "Le De re diplomatica" by L. Levillain, pp. 198-210.

⁵ The relations between Mabillon and Papebroch are described in *Archives de la France Monastique*, Vol. V, 1908, pp. 171-175, by a modern Bollandist, Albert Poncelet, S.J.

later to become Mabillon's inseparable companion, is of interest in showing Mabillon's thoughts at the time. It is dated May 25, 1679:

Il y a déjà quelques jours que j'ai reçu votre lettre du 21 avril; je vous suis bien obligé du soin que vous prenez de ma santé; elle est toujours un peu languissante, mais un peu meilleure que par le passé. . . . Je commence l'impression de notre deuxième partie (des *Actes des Saints*); le défaut de papier nous a fait différer plus de deux mois. Je travaille à une dissertation touchant les chartes, pour distinguer les véritables d'avec les fausses. Le Père Papebrogue, qui en a donné connexture, m'a donné sujet de réfuter les règles qu'il avance, que je trouve fausses.⁶

Finally in 1681 the work appeared bearing the title *De re diplomatica libri VI, in quibus quidquid ad veterum instrumentorum antiquitatem, materia, scripturam et stilum; quidquid ad sigilla, monogrammata, subscriptiones, ac notas chronologicas; quidquid inde ad antiquarium, historicam, forensemque disciplinam, pertinet, explicatur et illustratur. Accedunt commentarius de antiquis Regum Francorum Palatiis; Veterum scripturarum varia specimina, tabulis IX comprehensa; nova ducuntorum et amplius monumentorum collectio* (Paris, 1681, in folio, 635 pages). It was dedicated to M. Colbert, Minister of Finance, and divided into six books.

The following summary will convey an idea of the doctrine contained in this masterpiece of the greatest of diplomatists:

In the beginning of the treatise Mabillon indicates the usefulness of the work he is undertaking, namely, to furnish the rules for distinguishing genuine, authentic documents from those that are false, uncertain or suspected. In seeking these rules the diplomatist should use the greatest moderation, a spirit of candor and good faith, for both those who reject all diplomas because a few are known to be spurious, and those who uncritically accept all diplomas without distinction are equally to be condemned.

In the second chapter Mabillon classifies charters as ecclesiastical (sovereign pontiffs, bishops, churches); or royal (*praecepta*, *induculi*, *placita*, *tractoriae*, *descriptiones*, *panchartae*); or private (*parielae*, *ambaginales*, *breves investiturae*, *notitiae*). All

⁶ Broglie, *Mabillon*, Paris, 1888, Vol. I, p. 108.

of these terms are then defined with great precision. These *acta* are preserved in archives. In order not to be compelled in every instance to have recourse to the originals, two kinds of books were composed, cartularies and "*libri censuales*" or polyptiques. These should not be condemned too hastily because of minor defects in them. Criticism is, however, legitimate if historical errors are discovered, formulas contrary to the usage of the period, titles, dignities and other terms not in use at the time.

In the following chapters Mabillon discusses the question of the antiquity of diplomas and charters granted to churches and monasteries, in which he refutes Papebroch's opinions. In chapter three he proves the antiquity of ecclesiastical charters, showing especially that monasteries of men and convents of women at a very early period received episcopal charters of emancipation, pontifical privileges of exemption, thereby taking occasion to refute Papebroch's contention concerning the privilege granted by Pope Adeodatus to the monastery of St. Martin of Tours. In chapter four Mabillon shows by means of texts and examples that the use of royal diplomas was an ancient practise in Gaul, Spain, and Italy. Finally, in chapter five he gives the same demonstration in favor of private charters. He then treats the question of donations "*sine scripto*," and proves that those donations "*nudo verbo*" which Marsham and Papebroch used to contest the antiquity of written *acta* had continued in use till at least the thirteenth century. But Mabillon refrains from concluding from the antiquity of usage to the authenticity of the ancient *acta*; he admits that many documents were lost, and this leads him to seek the causes that brought about their disappearance.

Mabillon then takes up the constituent elements of charters which serve as a basis for the criticism of documents. After enumerating the many materials used in writing, he retains only five for examination—parchment, the bark of trees and papyrus, lead, rag-paper, and cotton-paper. He studies the inks—black, red, gold, and silver—pointing out the use of red ink in the subscriptions of the diplomas of the Roman and Byzantine emperors, and in some Carolingian diplomas. In chapter seven he reviews the different kinds of writing; four kinds were in use in France, the *Romana vetus*, the *Gothica*, *lombardica* and

saxonica. Besides the two kinds of ordinary Roman writing, the capital and the uncial or semigothic, there appeared a writing different in dimension and in the form of the letters in the charters of Ravenna; this style passed into Gaul in the fifth and sixth centuries, and became the Francogallic or Merovingic, so confused and entwined with ligatures that in the tenth and eleventh centuries it was very difficult to read. Under Charlemagne, writing underwent a reform, and the caroline, the writing of charters, must be distinguished from the minuscule, the writing of books. While this calligraphic revolution was going on in France, other writings, the Runic and the Lombardic, continued in use among the Danes and in Italy. The Lombardic in particular was preserved in Italy until the twelfth century, especially in the papal chancery, although it was no longer readable for most of the faithful. A meticulous description of a Merovingian diploma, with remarks on the caroline writing used from the time of Charlemagne to that of St. Louis, and notes on the Lombardic writing of papal bulls completes this comprehensive and conclusive demonstration.

From the external characteristics of charters, Mabillon passes in the second book to those that are more properly diplomatic; namely, the style, subscriptions, seals, and chronological notes. In seeking out the causes of barbarity of style, Mabillon observes that not only is it not necessary to suspect these old documents because of solecisms and barbarisms, but these vices of language are proofs of antiquity, if the falsity of the document is not otherwise established. This was an important element of criticism, for the corruption of latinity has varied with the times as with persons.

Faults against the accepted orthography are sometimes merely material errors, easy to discover. Notaries have sometimes corrected them, either by an erasure or by the interlinear addition of a letter, a syllable, or a word, also by crossing out a letter when it is doubled or repeated. Forgers have at times had recourse to erasure, but their interpolations should not destroy the value or the authenticity of the original. Restraint is necessary in claiming every erasure or addition to be a sign of interpolation; they may be perfectly legitimate.

Latin was the language of the more solemn *acta* until the time

of Louis XII and Francis I. Mabillon knew of no charters in French prior to 1122.

He then considers the five principal parts of charters; invocation, inscription, tenor, enumeration of benefits, and imprecation. He examines these five points in ecclesiastical, royal, and private charters, for, he says, it is from these particulars that rules are to be established for discerning authentic and false diplomas. Following this examination, he gives a thorough exposition of the use of subscriptions and seals, the final indication of validation which a document presents, authenticating the *acta* and giving authority to their contents.

Then comes a study of the most difficult and complicated part of diplomatic, chronological notes. Two questions precede all others; that of the month which commenced the year for the different peoples of Europe, and that of the time in which the year of the Incarnation was accepted and used by them. In antiquity the Roman year began with the month of March, and later with the month of January. The Church adopted the latter style, but some of the faithful later made the beginning of the year coincide with the feast of the Annunciation. Here again there was confusion, some placing it nine months before the Nativity, giving March 25, as in the Pisan style, others placing it three months after the Nativity, March 25, as in the Florentine style, but this created a difference of one year when the years were being reckoned. From Gregory of Tours it appeared that the Franks in the sixth and seventh centuries began the year in March, but, under the Merovingians, charters and chronicles are not dated by the year of the Incarnation. Under the Carolingians, the style of Noel was used in their *Annales* and the year of the Incarnation seldom appeared in the charters. Then the Gallican style was established, based on the course of the moon. In this style, very common in France in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the beginning of the year was computed from Easter. But this style was not universally accepted and still greater confusion resulted, so that the edict of Charles IX, imposing on all in the kingdom the first of January as the beginning of the year, was fully justified.

The second complicated point was the time when the peoples of Europe began to use the year of the Incarnation. Mabillon

treated this question with remarkable attention to tedious details. His finding was that there is no example of the use of the year of the Incarnation in bulls previous to those of Leo IX, and when it was used, Roman characters were employed in the documents.

The third book of the *De Re Diplomatica* is in great measure an application of the principles established in the first two books to those charters which had been condemned as false, or at least called into question. Mabillon refutes the arguments of his opponents and staunchly defends the archives of Saint-Denis and of the Benedictine Order. In the diploma of St. Maximin of Treves, taken as a type of the Merovingian diplomas by Papebroch, Mabillon points out no less than ten faults against the rules of true diplomatic. In the second part of this third book, he develops and completes what he had already said of cartularies and notices. There are two kinds of notices; authentic, public notices, and private notices. The former are of ancient origin, but the latter rarely go back further than the eleventh century. Cartularies are collections of ancient charters belonging to a church, a monastery, or a family, and seldom appear before the tenth century. In their stead "*libri censuales*" were used, containing a list of the possessions of the church or monastery, and at times copies of the more important documents. There were three kinds of cartularies: historical cartularies, authentic cartularies, containing transcriptions authenticated by public notaries, and simple collections of charters transcribed by private individuals. The last class is the most numerous.

In the fourth book, which is the work of Dom Germain, describing the old palaces of the French kings, where charters and diplomas were drawn up, one hundred and sixty-three palaces are listed. Several more have been discovered since Mabillon's death.

The fifth book contains some sixty beautifully engraved plates on which Mabillon placed the various kinds of handwriting employed in each century, a few lines from the diplomas of almost every king, and some few diplomas in their entirety. The sixth book contains two hundred and eleven documents which Mabillon believed to be incontestable. Thus the first three books of the *De Re Diplomatica* enuntiate the rules and principles of the

science, while the last three books contain the proofs of these rules.⁷

It was Mabillon's purpose in preparing this treatise to draw up a set of definite and approved rules which, after rigorous tests, could be applied in determining the truth or falsity of a document. His first attempt was completely successful, establishing once and for all a new science, that of diplomatic.⁸ His method was based on a comparison of documents of the same nature emanating from the same chancery. It was a painstaking, laborious process, demanding meticulous analysis of a considerable number of documents. Towards the end of the work, Mabillon admitted that had he known in the beginning what he learned by his experience with the difficulties of the task, he would never have undertaken the work. Then, in spite of all his diligence, he confessed that he had not seen everything that would be necessary for such a work, and requested his readers not to interpret "*severo ac summo jure*" the rules he had established. This admission showed the character and probity of Mabillon; he feared lest he propagate error, warned his readers against himself, and invited them to pursue their own researches and to correct his mistakes.

Mabillon's work was, indeed, not complete, nor was it free from errors and imperfections. But he had succeeded in opening up a vast field for further exploration, enabling his successors to enter in and investigate. The errors he had committed could be corrected by means of the rules he had established. It was only natural that the appearance of such a work should cause a sensation in the learned world. Among the first to congratulate Mabillon was the distinguished Bollandist, Papebroch. "The only satisfaction," he said, "to be derived from having written on this subject is that it has been the occasion for the production of such an admirable work as yours. Whenever opportunity offers, I shall make it clear that I agree entirely with your opinion; I am not a learned man but have a desire to learn." Mabillon was not slow to understand the nobility of these sentiments, and his reply to Papebroch revealed the deep piety which

⁷ A more detailed analysis of the *De Re Diplomatica* can be found in *Archives de la France Monastique*, Vol. V, pp. 210-242, from the pen of M. Levillain.

⁸ Cf. Giry, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

underlay his profound learning: "I shall never tire," wrote Mabillon, "of admiring such great modesty coupled with such great learning. I know of no example so illustrious, for where, indeed, is the scholar who, when defeated in a discussion, has had the courage to acknowledge it and to proclaim his defeat publicly? You have done this in a manner beyond all praise, and not satisfied with being supreme in erudition, you wish also to be supreme in humility. Far from being proud of my success, I would prefer to be the writer of your letter, so full of humility, than to entertain any vain glory for my own work." Mabillon and Papebroch continued to be the best of friends, and when occasion offered assisted each other in their respective works.

When the Spanish Inquisition, in a decree of November 14, 1695, condemned the volumes of the *Acta Sanctorum* of the Bollandists for March, April, and May, Mabillon was visibly affected.⁹ On learning that the decree of Toledo had been appealed to Rome, Mabillon at once took up the cause of the persecuted Bollandists. He wrote to the Procurator-General of the Maurist Congregation at Rome, Dom Claude Estiennot, instructing him to interview Cardinals Casanata, Colloredo, Aguirre and Noris, to avert a condemnatory decree against his Jesuit friend. Mabillon himself wrote to Cardinal Colloredo on January 2, 1696, explaining the injustice of the Toledo decree, and urging the Cardinal to exert his influence in behalf of the Bollandists. Mabillon's efforts in their behalf were not unappreciated by the Bollandists. The successors of Papebroch at the beginning of the present century considered a plan to publish a memorial in honor of the second centenary of the learned Benedictine's death, which was due to occur in December, 1907. The memorial was to consist mainly of the correspondence carried on between Papebroch and Mabillon. The attempt failed to materialize because a search for the letters proved fruitless. In a volume published on the occasion of the second centenary celebration of Mabillon's death, Père Albert Poncelet, S.J., of the Bollandists, contributed an article on the relations between Papebroch and Mabillon. He concluded with this tribute: "Il ne nous reste donc . . . qu'à présenter ici cette modeste et incomplète notice, comme un

⁹ Cf. Delehayce, *The Work of the Bollandists*, Princeton, 1922, p. 129.

témoignage de l'affectueuse et profonde reconnaissance que les successeurs de Jean Bollandus et de Daniel Papebroch conservent à l'ordre bénédictin, et spécialement à l'un de ses fils, illustre entre tous, le bon et savant Jean Mabillon."¹⁰

The splendid example of Papebroch, however, was not followed by other members of the Society of Jesus. A spirit of opposition and hostility characterized the relations of the Jesuits with the Congregation of St. Maur.¹¹ The strictures of Papebroch had been favorably received by the Jesuits of Paris, but his humble acceptance and open admission of Mabillon's superiority were a painful disappointment to them. His honor, or at least that of the Society, must, they felt, be vindicated. A refutation of the *De Re Diplomatica* was therefore carefully prepared at the Collège de S. Louis-le-Grand. After enjoying a universal approbation for more than twenty years, the *De Re Diplomatica* was openly attacked when Père Germon, S.J., published his *De veteribus regum Francorum diplomatibus et arte secernendi antiqua diplomata a falsis ad R. P. J. Mabillonium disceptatio*, at Paris, in 1703.¹² Germon builds up his thesis on the argument that there is no art without certain rules; the rules given by Mabillon can be no more certain than the originals on which they are based; yet these originals are not sufficiently certain to be the foundation of an art, and, indeed, many are false.¹³ Then, coming to his proofs, Germon finds only conjectures and innuendos. His attacks are directed almost entirely against the archives of Saint-Denis. The following is an example: Mabillon published sixteen Merovingian diplomas of which there is no trace in the work of Doublet published in 1625, or in previous authors; whence did they come, if they were not fabricated since 1625? The work shows that Germon had only a mediocre knowledge of the Middle Ages. Although he was defended by

¹⁰ *Archives de la France Monastique*, Vol. V, p. 171-175. For particulars of the life of Papebroch, Cf. Jean Pien, *Historia de vita, gestis, ac virtutibus R. P. Danielis Papebrochii*, in the *Acta Sanctorum*, at the beginning of Tome VI for June, Part I, p. 16, num. 72.

¹¹ Cf. Broglie, *op cit.*, Vol. II, p. 214; Chavin de Malan, *Histoire de Mabillon*, Paris, 1843, p. 330.

¹² Cf. Ernst Babelon, "Une querelle scientifique entre les Jésuites et Bénédictins, origine de la Diplomatique" in *Le Contemporain*, 1878, pp. 297-320.

¹³ Chavin de Malan, *op. cit.*, pp. 343-344.

Jesuit authors,¹⁴ his conclusions were rejected by contemporary scholars. Giry styles Germon's attack a "réfutation sans valeur et maladroite, mais pleine d'insinuations perfides."¹⁵

The appearance of Germon's work aroused violent protests on all sides, and occasioned a new "Diplomatic War."¹⁶ Mabillon was so little impressed that at first he refused to reply to it. But at the insistence of his friends he agreed to publish a supplement to his previous work, entitled *Librorum de re diplomatica supplementum in quo archetypa in his libris pro regulis proposita ipsaeque regulae denuo confirmantur, novisque speciminibus et argumentis asseruntur et illustrantur.*¹⁷ In this supplement Mabillon completes his doctrine, adding new observations and several more diplomas. He again justifies the archives of Saint-Denis, supported by additional proofs and demonstrations. Applying his own method, and with the help of diplomas, Mabillon restored and clarified the chronology of the Merovingian kings, which previous to his time had been clouded in obscurity. In refuting the objections of Père Germon, Mabillon, without naming his opponent, gave a sufficiently clear and satisfactory reply.

It is not necessary to enter into this second "Diplomatic War" which lasted several years and caused the publication of many works of no permanent value.¹⁸ When Mabillon refused to reply directly to Père Germon, several friends entered the lists in his defense. The Italian Justo Fontanini, professor in the Roman College, Dominic Lazzarini, and Anthony Gatti, published several works against the Jesuit who replied with memoir for memoir. But the Benedictines could not leave to others the whole burden of the defense. Dom Ruinart and Dom Coustant took up their pens in justification of Mabillon's treatise. The quarrel was protracted beyond the death of Mabillon, and, al-

¹⁴ Cf. De Feller, *Biographie Universelle*, Paris, 1848, arts. Mabillon and Germon.

¹⁵ Giry, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

¹⁶ *Histoire des contestations sur la diplomatique avec l'analyse de cet ouvrage composé par le R. P. D. J. Mabillon*, Paris, 1708. It was anonymous, and has been attributed to the Abbé Raguét and to the Jesuit Lallement.

¹⁷ Paris, 1704, in-fol. pp. viii-116.

¹⁸ Besides the works already mentioned, Nicéron, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des hommes illustres*, Paris, 1721-1745, in Vol. VII, pp. 351-358 describes the quarrel, giving a list of the authors involved, and their works.

though it did not succeed in silencing the persistent Jesuit, it did serve to deprive him of any further recognition in the science of diplomatic.

Mabillon had almost completed a revision of the *De Re Diplomatica* when he was overtaken by death in 1707. The second edition was completed by his disciple, Dom Ruinart, and published in 1709. It is superior to the first edition, and contains, in addition to Mabillon's final judgments on the subject, several new documents and a preface by Dom Ruinart, in which he refutes the arguments brought against Mabillon by the Englishman, George Hickes. A third edition of the work was published at Naples in 1789.

After the appearance of the *De Re Diplomatica*, a new interest was taken in the study of diplomas and charters. By the middle of the eighteenth century, many documents of every country and of every description had been discovered. New problems presented themselves for discussion. Mabillon had not considered documents of later date than the thirteenth century, and a revision of his work became necessary. A further discussion over the origin of the abbey of St. Victor in Caux, and over the authenticity of the archives contained in it, gave occasion to two Benedictines of St. Maur, Dom Tassin and Dom Toustain, to compile the *Nouveau Traité de Diplomatique*, in six large quarto volumes, a more comprehensive treatise than Mabillon's, published between 1750 and 1756. Completing the work of Mabillon, this treatise contains many more documents, and, as it was more extensive in its scope, it had decided advantages over the *De Re Diplomatica*. Although bulky in form and in some respects not well arranged, a detailed alphabetical table is of great assistance to those who consult it. In time it superseded entirely the *De Re Diplomatica*, and continued to be the best in its field until the middle of the last century.

In the science of diplomatic, Mabillon was a pioneer, an initiator, and the principles he enuntiated have withstood the attacks and criticisms of two centuries. They are as true today as when Mabillon first formulated them. His influence is evident in almost every work on diplomatic that has appeared since his time. In Spain, the Benedictine Joseph Perez published in 1698 a series of dissertations on diplomatic in which he declared him-

self in favor of Mabillon's doctrine. In England, Madox wrote a dissertation on ancient charters which he placed at the head of his edition of the *Formulare Anglicanum*, in 1702. In 1705, George Hickes published his *Linguarum septentrionalium thesaurus*, and both Madox and Hickes accepted Mabillon's main principles, although Hickes disagreed with Mabillon on some details. In Italy, Scipio Maffei published in 1727 his *Istoria Diplomatica*, and Muratori in 1740 introduced several diplomatic treatises into his great collection, the *Antiquitates Italicae*. The first diplomatic treatise of any importance in Germany was the *Chronicon Gotwicense*, published in 1732 by George Bessel. This was followed closely by similar works of Daniel Baring, C. H. Eckhard, and John Heumann.¹⁹

Mabillon's influence was not confined to the scholars of his own time. Today, and within the last century, when so much work has been done in the auxiliary sciences of history, the most eminent diplomatists have considered themselves disciples and followers of the "Father of diplomatic"; Sickel, Bresslau, Muhlbacher, Tangl, Rietsch, and Erben, in Germany; Quicherat, Mas-Latrie, Giry, Julien Havet, L. Delisle, and Prou, in France; Cesare Paoli in Italy, Reussens in Belgium. Leopold Delisle says of Mabillon: "Le plus illustre des disciples de Luc d'Achery augmenta singulièrement les collections de son maître; il s'appliqua avant tout à dissiper les ténèbres qui enveloppaient les documents de l'histoire du moyen âge, et, dans son immortel traité *De re diplomatica*, il posa les règles qui ont résisté aux plus vives attaques, et dont la vérité a été confirmée par les travaux plus modernes."²⁰ Another testimony from Léon Gautier is: "C'est le livre qui a créé la science diplomatique, et peu de sciences ont eu le bonheur d'être tout d'abord formulées avec cette supériorité. Mais ce chef-d'oeuvre a le grand défaut pour notre temps d'être écrit en latin; les Français ne lisent plus le latin."²¹ The following tribute of the continuators of Mabillon's work, Dom Tassin and Dom Toustain, in their *Nouveau Traité*,

¹⁹ On the development of historical studies in the eighteenth century, Cf. Monod, "Du progrès des études historiques," in the *Revue Historique*, tom. I, 1876, p. 20.

²⁰ *Cabinet des manuscrits*, Paris, 1874, t. II, p. 63.

²¹ *Quelques mots sur l'étude de la paléographie et de la diplomatie*, Paris, 1864, p. 76.

is true today in spite of the constant improvement and development of the science which Mabillon founded: "His system is the true one. Whoever follows any other road cannot fail to lose his way. Whoever seeks to build on any other foundation will build upon sand."

CHAPTER V

THE ITER GERMANICUM

The important literary enterprises of Mabillon often compelled him to leave his peaceful retreat in the abbey of St. Germain-des-Prés in order to search for necessary documents and manuscripts. Today with our great libraries where the literary treasures of the past have been centralized, the scholar encounters little or no difficulty in his search for materials. Catalogues, inventories and indices are at his disposal, and an army of trained workers is ready to aid him. But Mabillon and his associates had no such help or assistance. From the period of the Renaissance most of the important documents necessary for historical work were in the possession of private libraries and institutions, and remained practically inaccessible. It was, therefore, physically impossible to obtain a list of extant documents or information concerning their whereabouts. When such a list did exist, it had to be consulted on the spot. This necessitated the undertaking of many journeys, at great expense, in times when travel was no pleasure. It also involved troublesome negotiations with private owners who were often eccentric and unreasonable. But documents were indispensable: "no documents, no history."¹ Consequently we read of scholars travelling from one city to another, visiting the libraries and private collections, in search of material needed to carry on their respective works. Many weeks, often several months were thus spent on the road. These scientific expeditions were later described in detail, and have come down to us under the technical name of "Iter." According to Père Delehaye, the Bollandists seem to have been the first to organize them, their initial effort being made as early as 1660, when Henschenius and Papebroch journeyed to Rome for material necessary for the continuation of the *Acta Sanctorum*.²

¹ Cf. Langlois and Seignobos, *Introduction to the Study of History*, London, 1925, Ch. I, Bk. I.

² Delehaye, *The Work of the Bollandists* (trans), Princeton University Press, 1922. In a footnote on page 79, the learned Bollandist cites the *Iter Italicum* of Mabillon, published in 1687, which gives the impression that this was Mabillon's first literary journey. Mabillon travelled all over Flanders in 1672.

Travel in the seventeenth century was not what it is today, when fast, comfortable trains and boats speedily convey one to his destination without the least inconvenience. In the seventeenth century one had to rely on bulky, uncertain stage-coaches, or, where these did not exist, to travel on foot. Progress was slow, and patience a necessary virtue. To travel as a monk had many advantages. France at that time was literally covered with monasteries and houses of Religious Orders, where shelter for the night was always assured. From the descriptions left us by those redoubtable champions of truth, we can easily picture them in their journeys. Always going in pairs, the monks would leave their monastery, after affectionately embracing their confrères and reciting a few prayers in the chapel of the abbey. They usually travelled on foot, but occasionally, when the journey was of any length, they took advantage of public conveyances or accepted private assistance when it was offered. Once they were out of the suburbs, the two monks would recite together the *Itinerarium*, or prayers for times of travel. Arriving at a monastery, they requested permission to see the library. When the request was granted (it was sometimes refused), they carefully examined the manuscripts and charters, making an indication in their notes, or copying when the document was valuable and time permitted. Having seen and obtained what was necessary, they would continue along the road until they reached the next monastery. When the purpose of their mission was accomplished, the two would return home with their precious booty—notes, indications, and copies. Sometimes they brought back with them a valuable manuscript, when they had the money to purchase it, or the eloquence necessary to persuade the owners to part with it. As soon as they returned, the fruits of the journey were examined, compared and coordinated. Such was the process through which passed those great literary enterprises that have remained a lasting testimony to the painstaking, laborious effort of men consecrated to the service of truth.³

It should not be necessary to state that travelling occupied a considerable place in the long life of Mabillon. Much as he disliked leaving the peace and quiet of his monastery, his passion for study and the prosecution of his prodigious works com-

³ Cf. Broglie, *Mabillon*, Paris, 1888, Vol. I, p. 269-271.

pelled him often to take the pilgrim's staff and journey from city to city in quest of needed material. The first literary journey of Mabillon took place in 1672, when he travelled throughout Flanders. Nearly thirty years later, in 1701, we find him at Clairvaux. Between these two dates, he undertook about eight expeditions, some more important than others. More than half were undertaken in view of the *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis S. Benedicti*, the sources of which were scattered all over Europe in the libraries and archives of monasteries. To assemble material for his *De re diplomatica*, Mabillon had to explore the libraries of Champagne and Lorraine in 1680. He wrote at this time to Magliabecchi: "Je reviens d'un voyage assez long que j'ai fait en Lorraine pour y voir les archives et les bibliothèques du pays, afin de mettre la dernière main à notre ouvrage des chartes."⁴ With the exception of a few references in various personal letters, there is almost nothing about his first few journeys. Mabillon did not keep a diary, and made no notes of what had taken place. Finally realizing that many facts of interest or of value were in this way lost, he resolved to make notes on his next trip. Consequently, we have a detailed account of his three most important journeys, that of Burgundy in 1682, of Germany in 1683, and of Italy in 1685. Since it is the purpose of this dissertation to show Mabillon's contribution to history and historical science, it will not be necessary to follow him step by step in his travels. A brief outline of each trip will be given, followed by an analysis of the works which were the immediate result of these expeditions.

In 1682 it was imperative that Mabillon visit the monasteries and abbeys of Burgundy. For two months he and his companion, Dom Michel Germain, traversed the entire territory of south-eastern France, collecting many valuable manuscripts and making copious notes. Faithful to his previous resolution, Mabillon wrote an account of this journey in Latin, *Itinerarium Burgundicum*, printed by Dom Thuillier after Mabillon's death in the second volume of the *Oeuvres posthumes*. It is entirely different from other books of travel, in that it contains few observations on the scenery of the country, or the customs and habits of the people. It was written with the sole purpose of

⁴ Valéry, *Correspondance inédite de Mabillon*, Paris, 1846, Vol. I, p. 4.

assisting in some way literary science, and leaving an account of the fruits of the journey. The libraries which he visited are minutely described, a record made of the manuscripts and documents they contained, and sometimes copies made of those that would be of help to scholars. Inscriptions and tombstones are scrupulously noted, and charters and seals described in detail.

Before his departure for Burgundy, M. Colbert, the Minister of Finance, had requested Mabillon to investigate certain title-deeds in the monastery of Souvigny relating to the royal family. On his return, he immediately reported his success to the Minister. Colbert was very well satisfied with the results of the mission, and could not but admire the ability and skill manifested by this humble monk of St. Benedict. As Dom Ruinart tells us in his biography: ". . . il (Colbert) en eut toute la satisfaction qu'il pouvait attendre, et il reconnut facilement que ce religieux n'avait pas moins de bonne foi et de sincérité que d'habileté et d'expérience dans les matières."⁵ In order to show him some mark of his esteem, Colbert suggested that Mabillon make a similar journey into Germany at the expense of the King in order to visit the libraries and archives of that country. Having consulted his superiors, Mabillon agreed to go and began making the necessary preparations.

Relations between Germany and France were anything but friendly at this time. The arrogance of Louis XIV, the unwarranted possession of Strasbourg by the French, and the conquest of Franche-Comté had aroused the animosity of the peoples living across the Rhine. It was not without some hesitation and fear that Mabillon and Dom Germain prepared for their departure towards the end of June, 1683. However the work *De Re Diplomatica* had an enviable success among the scholars of Germany, and its author was considered as the greatest living savant in France. In their enthusiasm, some German authors gave Mabillon the surname "the great"; others went so far as to compare him to "an eagle in the clouds," and to style him "the prince of erudition." So, in spite of existing national hostilities, the two Frenchmen could be certain of a friendly welcome among the scholars of Germany.

⁵ Ruinart, *Abrégé de la vie de D. J. Mabillon*, Paris, 1709, p. 95; also Broglie, *op. cit.*, I, p. 286.

This time Mabillon was travelling not only as a simple religious, but in the name and at the expense of the King. Colbert had given him twenty-five hundred livres to cover the first expenses of the trip, and Mabillon also had with him several letters of recommendation to persons of renown. The principal purpose of the mission was to visit the libraries, archives, and charter-houses of the towns and monasteries through which they passed in order to render an account of the documents that would be useful and important to the history of the Church in general and of France in particular.

The two Benedictines travelled over Franche-Comté, Alsace, Bavaria, Tyrol, and Switzerland; penetrating as far as Munich and Salzburg; they were unable to reach Vienna, as intended, since this city was then being besieged by the Turks. On the return journey, they passed through Kempten, Constance, Reichenau, and Fribourg. Here the travellers learned of the death of Colbert, the sponsor of their expedition. Mabillon was deeply affected, and noted in his diary that he immediately said Mass for Colbert's soul. Leaving Fribourg, they continued towards Alsace by way of Brisach and Colmar, pushed on to Strasbourg, Verdun, Rheims, Soissons, and finally reached Paris. They had been received everywhere with evident good-will and cordiality. Archives and libraries were open to them and Mabillon was free to copy all the manuscripts he wished. He thus ends the account of his journey in the *Iter Germanicum*:

Ici, lecteur, se termine le récit de notre voyage, que nous avons raconté fort brièvement, quoique, sans doute, la sécheresse du style et des observations l'ait fait paraître trop long. Il nous eût été facile d'ajouter nombre de remarques sur les mœurs diverses des peuples que nous avons vus, si j'avais cru que cela fût en sa place. Mais, afin de ne pas paraître flatter en louant les uns, ni médire en blâmant les autres, j'ai passé beaucoup de choses sous silence. Si, en quelques endroits, quelqu'un pense que nous avons manqué aux lois de la modestie, en rapportant plus qu'il ne convenait des honneurs qui nous ont été rendus, qu'il veuille se persuader que la seule crainte de paraître ingrats envers ceux qui nous avaient prodigué ces attentions, m'a porté à en faire mention. En fin de compte, le but principal de cet ouvrage est de montrer à tout le monde combien la république des lettres est redevable à l'illustre Colbert, qui, après avoir fait faire, grâce à la munificence du Roi, d'autres

voyages d'une importance bien plus grande pour les lettres et pour les arts, a encore pris soin de faire exécuter celui-ci, à valoir ce que de raison. . . . Tel est, dis-je, le but de cet itinéraire. Car notre plus grand désir est de prouver publiquement notre reconnaissance et notre souvenir. En un mot, quand notre ouvrage ne serait d'aucune utilité pour le public, certes, c'en sera une très-grande pour nous d'avoir acquitté un devoir auquel nous étions tenus.⁶

Returning to St. Germain-des-Prés with an ample supply of useful and valuable historical material, Mabillon published during the year 1685, two large volumes, a sufficient justification of his literary journey across the Rhine. One volume was called, *De Liturgia Gallicana*, the other comprised the fourth volume of his *Vetera Analecta*, the first three volumes having been published previous to his expedition into Germany. No mention has yet been made of this work, which formed a vast historical repertory, a necessary complement to the valuable and incomparable *Spicilegium* of Dom. Luc d'Achery. Having discovered or unearthed many interesting and curious fragments or *pièces* during his literary journeys to Flanders, Lorraine, and Burgundy, and finding no place for them in his *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis S. Benedicti*, Mabillon decided to publish them in a separate work, rather than to allow them to remain buried in his portfolio files. To these fragments he added some helpful observations and a learned commentary.

The first volume was published in 1675 with the following descriptive title: *Veterum Analectorum tomus I complectens varia fragmenta et Epistolas scriptorum ecclesiasticorum, tam prosa quam metro, hactenus inedita, cum adnotationibus et aliquot disquisitionibus Domni Joannis Mabillonii, Presbyteri ac Monachi Ord. S. Benedicti, e Congregatione S. Mauri. Lutetiae Parisiorum, apud Ludovicum Billaine, 1675, in-8.* Mabillon adds to this volume two separate dissertations, of which the first concerns a "Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul," taken from the writings of St. Augustine. He then proves that this Commentary, ordinarily found among the writings of the Venerable Bede, is in reality the work of Florus the Deacon. The second dissertation is on the "Confessions of Faith" of Alcuin. *Veterum Analectorum tomus II complectens varia opuscula, epistolas ac*

⁶ Cf. Broglie, *op. cit.*, I, p. 333.

monumenta ecclesiastica, hactenus inedita, cum anotationibus, observationibus et Dissertatione singulare D. Joannis Mabillonii, etc., Paris, 1676. This volume, larger than the first, contains among others a work of Gerbert, later Pope Sylvester II, "De informatione episcoporum." Mabillon adds an interesting treatise of his own on the monastic profession of St. Gregory the Great. During a conversation Mabillon had at one time with M. Adrian de Valois, the latter declared that he would have no difficulty in admitting that St. Gregory had been a Benedictine, if it could be proved that he had been a monk. Mabillon proves this very conclusively from the writings of Pope Gregory himself. In this volume, Mabillon presents another interesting dissertation—"Observationes de multiplici Berengarii damnatione, fidei professione, et relapsu, deque ejus poenitentia." In describing the death of Philip Augustus, King of France, Mabillon relates a very curious thing which took place at the obsequies in the Church of Saint-Denis—two bishops celebrated Mass at the same time at two different altars, while the same choir answered the two celebrants at the same time.

The third volume is entitled: *Veterum Analectorum tomus III complectens Acta Episcoporum Cenomensium: Kalendarium Ecclesiae Carthagenensis, variasque epistolas, et Dissertationes duas editoris de Epocha Dagoberti*, Paris, 1682. This volume contains a circular letter sent out by Charlemagne to all the bishops of the Empire requesting them to write the instructions they were accustomed to give on the administration of Baptism. The Acts of the Bishop of Le Mans form an excellent fragment of French history, because of the number of diplomas of the Merovingian and Carolingian Kings, and the activity of many French prelates. There is also a Calendar of the Church in Africa, written fifteen hundred years ago, which Mabillon has enriched with instructive notes. Two dissertations are added, one on the reign of King Dagobert I and Clovis II, and the other on the date of the Ordination and death of St. Didier, Bishop of Cahors, a much mooted point at that time.

The fourth volume appeared in 1685, and is entitled: *Veterum Analectorum tomus IV complectens Iter Germanicum Domni J. Mabillonii et Domni Michaelis Germain e Congregatione S. Mauri, cum monumentis in eo repertis*. It is in this volume that Mabillon placed his *Iter Germanicum*, describing in detail his

trip to Germany: It is followed by many curious pieces, collected in the different libraries, such as an old collection of Roman inscriptions; twenty-six letters of Alcuin; an old description of the city of Rome; and many interesting poems. Mabillon adds several observations on manuscripts he had seen in Germany.

These four volumes were published later in 1723 in a single folio volume by M. Louis François de la Barre of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres. M. Jean Albert Fabricius reprinted the *Iter Germanicum* at Hamburg in 1717, inserting a preface on the libraries of Germany of which Mabillon speaks.

The second work, a result of his journey to Germany, was also printed in 1685, entitled: *De Liturgia Gallicana libri III in quibus veteris Missae, quae ante annos mille apud Gallos in usu erat, forma ritusque eruuntur ex antiquis monumentis, Lectionario Gallicano hactenus inedito, cum tribus Missalibus Thomasiensis, quae integra referuntur: Accedit disquisitio de cursu Gallicano, seu de divinorum officiorum origine et progressu in Ecclesiis Gallicanis*. Mabillon dedicated this volume to the Archbishop of Rheims, Le Tellier, who, since the death of M. Colbert, had become his avowed protector. On their way to Germany, the two literary pilgrims left the road leading to Bâle, in order to visit the ancient Abbey of Luxeuil. While rummaging through the library, Mabillon's heart leaped with joy when accidentally he came upon an old Gallican Lectionary, written in beautiful Merovingian minuscules of the seventh century. This very important discovery completed the works and findings of Bona and Thomasi, making possible a reconstruction of the Old Gallican liturgy in use in the Church of France before the time of Charlemagne.

Mabillon divides this treatise into three parts. The first book contains a very learned study of the Gallican Liturgy, with descriptions of the manner of celebrating the Holy Sacrifice and of the vestments worn by the ministers previous to the adoption of the Roman Rite.⁷ A comparison is then made between the Gallican and other liturgies, principally the Mozarabic, which is remarkable in its erudition. In the second book, Mabillon

⁷ Mabillon was wrong in attributing the suppression of the Gallican Liturgy to Charlemagne, since Pepin the Short was principally responsible. Cf. Duchesne, *Origines du Culte Chrétien*, Paris, 1925, p. 107.

gives the Lectionary of Luxeuil, with notes and commentary. M. Delisle thus describes the Lectionary now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, No. 9427:

Minuscule très élégante du VII siècle. . . . Le volume présente plusieurs lacunes. Le premier des cahiers qui subsistent (fol. 3-9) porte, au bas de la première page, la signature VIII, d'où l'on peut conclure que les sept premiers cahiers manquent. Il y a dans le cours et à la fin du volume, d'autres lacunes. Le livre était déjà dans cet état de mutilation au XVII siècle, quand Mabillon le découvrit à l'abbaye de Luxeuil. Parchemin, 248 feuillets, 287 mill. sur 180. Ecriture du VII siècle. C'est l'un des plus curieux monuments de la paléographie mérovingienne. No. 1444 du supplément latin.⁸

It was indeed unfortunate that Mabillon did not see fit to publish the entire document; he gives only the rubrics, and the beginning and end of each lesson. But his opportune notes and observations betray a profound knowledge of liturgical science.

The third book is simply a reedition of three fragments of Gallican Sacramentaries, previously printed by the venerable Theatine, P. Joseph Thomasi: *Missale Gothicum*, *Missale Francorum*, and *Missale Gallicanum vetus*. At the end, forming a sort of appendix, Mabillon offers a commentary on the Gallican Office, *De Cursu Gallicano*. Tracing the history and determining the nature of the Divine Office in Gaul, the dissertation contains the most precious information we possess on the history of psalmody in general.⁹ The distinctive contribution of Mabillon to the liturgical sciences will be treated more fully in the following chapter, in which the *Museum Italicum* will be discussed.

⁸ Delisle, *Le Cabinet des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, 1881, t. III, p. 220; t. II, p. 304. Cf., also *Archives de la France Monastique*, Vol. V, pp. 157-158.

⁹ The edition of Mabillon's *De Liturgia Gallicana*, is reproduced in Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, t. 72.

CHAPTER VI

THE ITER ITALICUM

After his return to France, Mabillon was fortunate in enjoying the admiration and esteem of the Archbishop of Rheims, Le Tellier, who since the death of Colbert, had been appointed to look after all things pertaining to literature.¹ Le Tellier was also charged with the administration of the Bibliothèque du Roi, and owing to his zeal and enthusiasm, this institution was already celebrated throughout Europe for its rare collection of books and manuscripts. Having remarked the successful expedition of Mabillon into Germany, Le Tellier decided to send him on a similar mission, this time into Italy. He spoke of his plans to the King, and His Majesty was warm in his approval. It was on this occasion, says Dom Tassin, that the king expressed a desire to see Mabillon.² A few days later, the learned Benedictine was presented to His Majesty by M. Le Tellier and M. Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux. "Sire," said M. Le Tellier, "I have the honor of presenting to your Majesty, the most learned man in your kingdom." Bossuet, thinking M. Le Tellier said that to pique him, added, "Sire, the Archbishop of Rheims should add, 'and the most humble.'"

Mabillon was not anxious to undertake another journey at this time. He was then fifty-two years of age, and his health was not strong. In fact, while preparations were under way, he became seriously ill, and it was necessary to delay the departure indefinitely. In the meantime, he travelled over Normandy, partly to regain his health, and partly to investigate some of the libraries: This time he was not accompanied by the sturdy Dom Germain. The superiors of the Congregation had placed under Mabillon's care and direction a young religious

¹ Charles-Maurice le Tellier, Archbishop of Rheims, was a brother of François-Michel le Tellier, the Marquis de Louvois, Minister of War in 1666; their father, Michel le Tellier, was Secretary of State under Louis XIII.

² Tassin, *Histoire littéraire de la Congrégation de S. Maur*, Paris, 1770, p. 210.

of great promise, Dom Thierry Ruinart. Born at Rheims in 1657, Ruinart became the devoted disciple of Mabillon, ever regarding him as his father and master. Under Mabillon's guidance and direction, Ruinart published several remarkable works on Christian origins, the most celebrated being his *Acta primorum Martyrum sincera et selecta*, forming the most precious collection we have since the Acts of the Apostles.³ In a lengthy criticism of this work, P. Delehaye begins: "We can scarcely dispense ourselves from passing in rapid review, a justly celebrated collection which for a long period, in the eyes of most scholars, expressed the latest word in hagiographic criticism, and thanks to which the line of demarcation between fable and history had been drawn once and for all: we refer to Dom Ruinart's *Acta sincera*."⁴ Ruinart was to be intimately associated with all the works of Mabillon from this time until the latter's death in 1707. Dom Ruinart lived only two years after his master, but in that time he wrote the most valuable work we have on the intimate life and virtues of Mabillon.

When he had sufficiently recovered, Mabillon decided to attempt the journey to Italy. It was to be the longest and the most important of his career, an official mission in the name of the King of France to secure books and manuscripts for the Royal Library. The time was not auspicious; relations between the courts of France and Rome were anything but friendly. A bitter quarrel was raging between King Louis XIV and Pope Innocent XI over papal appointments. All feared an open rupture.

Before his departure, Mabillon received the following instructions from Le Tellier:

Mémoire pour le Père Mabillon

Le Père Mabillon, en passant à Lyon, prendra l'adresse du sieur Anisson, libraire, et dès qu'il sera entré en Italie, il adressera à Lyon, audit Anisson, toutes les lettres qu'il m'écrira; le Père Mabillon chargera pour cet effet ledit Anisson de m'envoyer à Paris par la poste toutes les lettres qu'il lui adressera pour moi pendant le cours de son voyage.

³ Chavin de Malan, *Histoire de Mabillon et la Congrégation de S. Maur*, Paris, 1843, pp. 454-458.

⁴ Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints* (trans.), London, 1907, pp. 115-124.

Il en sera pour ballots de livres comme pour les lettres, et de chaque ville où il aura fait quelque achat, il m'enverra devant que d'en partir ce qu'il aura acheté.

Il m'écrira toutes les semaines une fois, et il me rendra compte tant des achats de livres imprimés que des rencontres curieuses qu'il fera de pièces manuscrites, et de ce qui se passera dans son voyage.

Quand sur les lettres de crédit que je lui donne, il aura pris de l'argent, il aura soin de me le mander et de me dire quelle somme il aura prise, afin que, sur cet avis qu'il me donnera, je fasse rembourser le sieur Clerex, banquier, qui m'a donné ces lettres de crédit.

En partant de Milan, et ensuite de Venise, il me marquera quel jour à peu près il pourra arriver à Rome.⁵

Bidding farewell to their fellow-religious for fifteen months, Mabillon and Germain left Paris on April 1, 1685. Ruinart, who was only a deacon awaiting priesthood, tearfully wished his master "bon voyage," looking upon Germain with no little envy. During the trip, Dom Germain had charge of the correspondence, while Mabillon faithfully recorded the various incidents in his diary, enabling him to write the *Iter Italicum* on his return.

They reached Lyons in five days, travelling part of the way by "diligence," the rest by boat along the Saône. M. Jean Anisson, the librarian, received them; his brother Jacques, who was to accompany them according to the instructions, was waiting in Turin. After three days at Lyons, making final preparations for the road, the two travellers departed across the Alps, met Jacques Anisson at Turin, and continued toward Rome, stopping at Milan, Verona, Padua, Venice, Ravenna, Ferrara, and Loretto. Fulfilling the purpose of his mission, Mabillon purchased many books and manuscripts during his visits, sending them back to France. Thus we read in his account: "À Turin, pour un ballot de livres, 185 l., 10 s; à Milan, pour livres achetés pour le Roy, 286 l., 10 s."⁶

⁵ Broglie, *Mabillon*, Paris, 1888, Vol. I, pp. 344-345.

⁶ The following account is interesting, showing how scrupulously Mabillon recorded his expenses, and also giving an idea of the price of articles two hundred years ago:

À Paris, pour nos habits et les arthes à la diligence	267 liv.
Item, pour le reste du paiement à la diligence.....	84 liv.
Item, pour une montre.....	11 liv.
Item, pour le port des valises.....	3 liv. 10s.
Pour le cocher et autres menus frais.....	6 liv.

During their sojourn at Venice, Mabillon received the sad news of the death of Dom Luc d'Achery on April 19, 1685. This was a severe shock to him, for he had sincerely loved the saintly old man, to whom he was greatly indebted for guidance and direction during the early years of his work. The Congregation also suffered a heavy loss in the death of d'Achery; he was one of its pioneers, and was in great measure responsible for its success in the field of erudition.

The two weary pilgrims arrived at Rome on Wednesday, June 15, at five o'clock in the morning, having walked all night. Dom Ruinart, who received all the details of the journey upon Mabillon's return to Paris, tells why the latter was so anxious to reach the city before morning: "Il fit cette diligence pour prévenir quelques marques d'honneur, qu'il sçavoit qu' on lui préparoit à son arrivée, de la part du cardinal d'Estrées et de Dom Claude Estiennot procureur général de la congrégation." ¹

Mabillon received an enthusiastic reception in Rome. Eminent Italian scholars welcomed him, and gladly offered their assistance. He was in the Holy City but a short time when the Sacred Congregation of the Index singularly honored him with the title of "consultor." The Congregation requested his opinion on the works of Isaac Vossius, particularly the *De vera aetate mundi*, in which the biblical Deluge was restricted to that part of the earth inhabited by men. Mabillon, during his spare time

¹ Cf. Ruinart, *Abrégé de la vie de Mabillon*, Paris, 1709, p. 110; also Judart, *Travaux de l'Académie de Reims*, Vol. LXIV.

À Lyon, pour des bottes.....	32 liv.
Item, pour des bas à botter, des sangles et de la toile noir..	8 liv. 15s.
Item, pour la dépense des serviteurs.....	12 liv.
De Lyon à Turin, pour le voiturin et la dépense.....	99 liv.
À Turin, pour aller à Savilien ..	28 liv. 15s.
Pour la dépense de bouche à Turin.....	52 liv. 25s.
Pour la voiture et la dépense de bouche jusqu' à Milan..	66 liv. 15s.
Pour de menus frais à Milan.....	9 liv.
Pour aller à Arone.....	17 liv. 10s.
Pour le médecin et apothécaire.....	3 liv.
Pour des menus frais.....	6 liv. 15s.
Pour un carrosse, une matinée.....	2 liv. 10s.
Pour la dépense à Milan.....	74 liv. 10s.
Pour le bibliothécaire de l'Ambrosienne et les gens de M. Mezzabarba	8 liv.
Pour la voiture de Milan à Padoue.....	53 liv.
Pour la dépense de bouche.....	37 liv. 10s.

Cf., Broglie, *Mabillon*, Paris, 1883, Vol. I, p. 358.

when not engaged in the libraries and archives, studied the question and prepared his answer, which was given, "assis et couvert," before the nine cardinals of the Congregation and the Master of the Sacred Palace on January 29, 1686. Mabillon's report was found among his papers after his death, and was printed in the *Oeuvres posthumes* (Vol. II, p. 59), by Dom Vincent Thuillier: *Votum Domni Joannis Mabillonii de quibusdam Isaaci Vossii opusculis*. Since the proceedings of the Index are secret and unpublished, this unique document created a lively interest in its contents. In his statement, Mabillon does not deny that the opinion of Vossius is opposed to all patristic thought, and seems moreover to be contrary to the reading of Genesis that *all* the mountains were submerged, and *all* living flesh was swallowed up. But in interpreting the Hexaemeron, St. Augustine had departed from the literal sense of Scripture by rejecting the succession of days. The opinion of Augustine was not only not condemned, but it also had obtained the approval of St. Thomas. From this fact, Mabillon argues, a certain freedom of exegesis does not seem opposed to the spirit of the Church. Some Catholic theologians, among them Cajetan, maintained that the waters of the Deluge had respected the terrestrial paradise. The idea, therefore, of restricting the universality of the deluge is not opposed to faith or morals, and could be safely tolerated. Such was the line of argument pursued by Mabillon in his treatise. Most Catholic exegetes today maintain that we are not obliged to understand in the absolute sense the universality attributed by Scripture to the Deluge.⁸ And so Mabillon in defending Vossius was only advancing the opinion of subsequent scholars.

The members of the Congregation admired the modesty and learning of the Benedictine, and expressed their gratitude and appreciation. According to the ordinary procedure of the Index, a report was made to the Holy Office and to the Sovereign Pontiff after receiving the opinion of consultors.⁹ Sometime later a meeting was held, during which the works under scrutiny were again discussed secretly and a decision rendered. If a con-

⁸ Cf., E. Mangelot, in "L'Universalité restreinte du déluge à la fin du XVII^e siècle," in *Science Catholique*, Vol. 4 (1890).

⁹ Cf., B. Ojetti, S.J., *De Romana Curia*, Rome, 1910, pp. 128-134; also, L. Petit, *L'Index, son histoire, ses lois, sa force obligatoire*, Paris, 1888, p. 51.

demnation was agreed upon, the author and the name of his work or works, were listed among the "forbidden books," but no reason or explanation assigned. Five months after Mabillon had appeared before them, the Cardinals again met and condemned seven works of Vossius, including the *De vera aetate mundi*.¹⁰

Many writers on Mabillon and his works state that the Congregation followed his opinion.¹¹ They were misled, no doubt, by contemporaries of Mabillon, who were evidently misinformed. Dom Vincent Thuillier, in announcing the publication of the *Votum* in 1724, said that "Mabillon excusa tellement l'opinion de Vossius sur le Déluge, quoiqu' elle soit extrêmement hardie, que la Congrégation convint qu'elle pouvait être tolérée et qu'il n'y eut point de décret contre Vossius." Since the Congregation of the Index, as has been said, gives no reason for its condemnation, Mangenot, in a lengthy discussion of the question involved, maintains that the Congregation did not condemn the doctrine, but the manner in which the doctrine was presented by Vossius.¹² Were this true, and there is no way of finding out whether it is or not, then those who declared that the Cardinals agreed with Mabillon, were justified in their statement.

In an encyclical letter, *Romani Pontifices*, issued in 1900, Pope Leo XIII ordered a complete revision of the Index, and in the revised edition, over eight hundred books were omitted.¹³ It is interesting to note that among these is the *De Vera aetate mundi*, of Isaac Vossius. This certainly seems to be a justification, indirectly at least, of the opinion expressed by Mabillon before the Congregation in 1686.

Most of Mabillon's time in Rome was spent in the libraries and archives. Owing to the generosity and good-will of the illustrious archeologist, Raphael Fabretti, who willingly offered himself as their cicerone, the two Benedictines gained admittance to many places that were usually inaccessible. The relations of

¹⁰ There is an apparent discrepancy in the different editions of the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* regarding the date of the condemnatory decree. The *Index* of Benedict XIV (1758), pp. 291-2, gives July 2, 1686; the latest *Index* of Pius XI (1922), p. 282, has April 2, 1686.

¹¹ *Oeuvres posthumes de Mabillon*, Paris, 1724. pp. 8-9; Tassin, *op. cit.*, p. 210 and 268; Broglie, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 40. Massuet, Ruinart, de Boze, and Valéry utter the same error.

¹² Cf., *Science Catholique*, Vol. IV, p. 236.

¹³ Cf., J. Hilgers, *Der Index der verbotenen Bücher*. Freiburg, 1904, p. 113.

Fabretti with Mabillon will be mentioned later in this work, when a treatise of Mabillon on false relics and the Roman Catacombs is examined. Fabretti, as director of the Catacombs, had personally escorted Mabillon through those subterranean passage-ways, explaining the work of excavation then under way. The *Letter of Eusebius*, written by Mabillon after his return to France, was a severe criticism of the careless manner in which those excavations were conducted. Fabretti considered the book a personal attack, an ungrateful recompense for the generous treatment Mabillon had received from him when in Rome.

The two Benedictines met with a very strange reception from Christina, Queen of Sweden, then residing in Rome. They called to thank her for the free access granted them to her celebrated library, and also to present her with a copy of *De Liturgia Gallicana*, in which she had been mentioned. The humorous Dom Germain describes this amusing visit in one of his characteristic letters:

Nous portâmes il y a cinq jours le livre *De liturgia gallicana* à la Reine. Avant que de nous donner audience, elle voulut voir le livre, pour savoir comme on l'aurait traitée et si on y parlait d'elle. Elle se mit en colère contre le titre de *Sérénissime*, qu'elle prétend déroger à sa dignité. Son bibliothécaire eut bien de la peine à nous faire entendre par trois différentes fois qu'il fallait lui en faire ou dire un mot de satisfaction. Ce fut par là que dom Jean Mabillon aborda Sa Majesté. Elle témoigna, par quatre fois différentes, être très-mécontente de ce qu'il lui avait donné ce titre, qu'on s'avise, dit-elle, de me donner toujours à Paris. Mon nom est Christine, ajoute-t-elle; puisque je suis reine, je ne veux pas déroger à ma dignité; mon nom seul fait mon éloge: n'y retournez plus, et avertissez ceux de Paris de ne plus me donner ce titre. Dans la suite, l'entretien fut commode et très-agréable. Elle a beaucoup d'esprit; elle parle français comme si elle avait toujours vécu à la cour. Elle finit en demandant quelque sorte d'excuse de ce qu'elle avait parlé si durement, témoignant beaucoup d'estime de tout l'Ordre en général et de notre congrégation en particulier, et, ce qui est le meilleur, nous offrant à discrétion libre accès dans sa bibliothèque.¹⁴

¹⁴ Cf., Valéry, *Correspondance inédite de Mabillon*, Paris, 1846, Vol. I. p. 105; also, Broglie, *op. cit.*, I, p. 401. Dom Cabrol states in the *Archives de la France Monastique*, Vol. V, p. 158, that the *Liturgia Gallicana* was dedicated to Queen Christina, which is certainly incorrect. Mabillon dedicated it to Le Tellier; Queen Christina and her library receive a passing notice on the eighth page of the preface in the original edition of 1685.

On October 15, Mabillon and Germain left Rome for a short time to visit the libraries of Naples, Monte Cassino and Subiaco. They returned early in December to finish their work in the Eternal City. Finally the day of departure arrived, bringing joy to the hearts of the two Benedictines, anxious to return to the peaceful abbey of St. Germain-des-Prés and their confrères. They left Rome on February 5, arriving in Florence on February 11. Here they were joyfully received owing to the efforts of an intimate acquaintance of Mabillon, Antonio Magliabecchi, librarian of the Grand Duke of Tuscany. This humble Florentine scholar was known all over Europe for his wide knowledge of books and libraries, and many of Europe's most illustrious savants were numbered among his regular correspondents. Mabillon speaking of Magliabecchi says: ". . . il était depuis longtemps notre intime ami, grâce au commerce de lettres que nous entretenons ensemble. Sous sa conduite, et par ses conseils, nous fûmes au courant en peu de temps de tous les livres qui pouvaient nous servir dans les bibliothèques de Florence. Il est, en effet, doué d'une sagacité à qui rien n'échappe; sa mémoire est telle qu'il a tous les livres présents à l'esprit dans un ordre parfait: c'est un musée ambulant et comme une bibliothèque vivante. . . ." ¹²

From Florence, the two travellers once more resumed their return journey, visiting a few places along their route so that nothing might escape their notice. They reached Paris on July 2, 1686, after an absence of fifteen months, with a goodly supply of precious manuscripts and books. A group of their confrères met them outside the city, and escorted them in triumph to the abbey, where several renowned savants of France awaited them—Ducange, Baluze, d'Hèrouval, Lacroix, Renaudot—all anxious to hear of the success of the expedition.

A few days after his return, Mabillon went to Rheims to report to the Archbishop, Le Tellier, who was principally responsible for the mission. Le Tellier was well satisfied with the results and warmly congratulated Mabillon on his success. During the fifteen months, the literary pilgrims, if they may be called such, had received 5,200 livres and more than 200 Spanish pistoles (about 4,070 livres) from the Royal Treasury, sending

¹² Cf., Broglie, *op. cit.*, II, p. 51.

back to the Bibliothèque du Roi books and manuscripts, costing about 6,000 francs. They also brought back with them several copies of precious manuscripts taken from the originals, and valuable notes of every description. A recent study has been made of Mabillon's relations with the Bibliothèque du Roi by the learned M. H. Omont, a member of the Institute, formerly Inspector General of Libraries, and Conservateur in the Department of Manuscripts in the Bibliothèque Nationale. The results of his study were printed in a work published on the occasion of the second century of Mabillon's death.¹⁶ More than four thousand volumes were sent by Mabillon to the Bibliothèque du Roi, and these are among the most valuable of its celebrated collection. M. Omont gives a catalogue of the Latin, Greek and Italian manuscripts, purchased during the Italian expedition, with the folio numbers under which they are now registered at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

Not long after his return from Italy, Mabillon published the first volume of the *Museum Italicum*, constituting the results of his journey; the second volume appeared two years later, in 1689. The complete title is: *Museum Italicum seu Collectio veterum scriptorum ex bibliothecis Italicis, eruta a D. Johanne Mabillon et D. Michaelae Germain, Presbyteris et Monachis, Benedictinae Congregationis Sancti Mauri. Tomus primus in duas partes distinctus. Prima pars complectitur eorundem iter Italicum litterarium: altera vero varia Patrum opuscula, et vetera monumenta, cum Sacramentario et Poenitentiali Gallicano. Lutetiae Parisiorum, apud Johannem Boudot, 1687. Musei Italici tomus secundus, complectens antiquos libros rituales sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae, cum Commentario praevio in Ordinem Romanum. Ibidem apud eundem, 1689.* The most interesting part, the account of the journey, *Iter Italicum*, occupies the entire first section of tome one. In it Mabillon describes his expedition from one place to another, the libraries and archives along the route, interesting monuments, plates and medals, distinguished scholars and their conferences, curious inscriptions and epitaphs on tombs and buildings. It is the simple, unadorned account of a scholar in search of manuscripts, rare

¹⁶ M. H. Omont, "Mabillon et la Bibliothèque du Roi à la fin du XVII^e siècle" in the *Archives de la France Monastique (Mélanges et Documents)*, Paris, 1903, Vol. V, p. 107.

and interesting books, anything, in fact, that would be of help to science.

In the second section of tome one, Mabillon gives the text of an old Gallican Sacramentary, which he found in the abbey of Bobbio.¹⁷ The title of it is: *Liber Sacramentorum Ecclesiae Gallicanae*. But Msgr. Duchesne says it is more a Missal than a Sacramentary.¹⁸ In Mabillon's opinion, it was written in the seventh century, originating in the province of Besançon, probably Luxeuil, and belonged neither to the Roman, Ambrosian nor Mozarabic Rites, nor to the African Church, but to the Gallican Liturgy. The origin of this document was a complicated problem then, and has remained such to this day. Mabillon's conclusions have been much contested, especially since the resurrection of documents on Celtic liturgy, showing that it may have originated in Ireland, probably a part of the Missal of Stowe.¹⁹ However, as Dom Cabrol says, it was sufficient for the glory of Mabillon to have discovered, even to have saved forever from oblivion, a document of high rank; and for this, all liturgists should bless his memory.

In the second volume of the *Museum Italicum*, published in 1689, Mabillon prints another discovery, the ancient *Ordines Romani*, comprising fifteen ritual books of the Roman Rite, used in the early centuries of the Church. These are preceded by a brilliant commentary on the *Ordo Romanus*, the ancient basilicas, the Roman clergy, the stations and litanies, the ceremonies of a Pontifical Mass, Communion under both species, the consecration of a Sovereign Pontiff. It is recognized today that this discovery of the *Ordines Romani* and Mabillon's commentary form one of the most important contributions to the history of the Roman Liturgy.²⁰ In the *Mélanges et Documents*,

¹⁷ This Sacramentary is in the Bibliothèque Nationale, No. 13246; Cf., Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, t. 72, col. 451 sq.; Muratori, *Liturgia Romana*, t. II, p. 775-968. Neale and Forbes, *The Ancient Liturgies of the Gallican Church*, London, 1855, p. 205 sq.

¹⁸ Duchesne, *Origines du Culte Chrétien* (5th edit.), 1925, p. 166.

¹⁹ Cf., Duchesne, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-168. Dom Cabrol, a distinguished student of Liturgy, has an excellent article in the *Archives de la France Monastique*, Vol. V, pp. 147-167, entitled, "Mabillon et les études liturgiques." He discusses this document found by Mabillon, as well as the problems to which it gave rise.

²⁰ The *Ordines Romani* have been reproduced in Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, t. 78, col. 851 sq.

Dom Cabrol points out twenty different works of Mabillon that have liturgy for their direct object. These works together with his invaluable discoveries place Mabillon among the princes of this science, by the side of Thomasi, Bona, Bianchini, Ballerini and Quirini.

In this chapter and the preceding one, the principal journeys undertaken by Mabillon in the interests of science have been described, and the works which were the direct result of these journeys have been examined. Before his death in 1707, Mabillon was again obliged to leave his monastery from time to time in search of more material. He took advantage of one trip in 1690 to visit his aged father in Rheims, as he tells one of his correspondents: "Je viens d'une course dans les environs de Reims, où j'avais été voir mon père, qui est fort âgé et presque centenaire."²¹ His work on the *Annales Ordinis Sancti Benedicti*, which will be considered in another chapter, was the occasion of several tours of investigation—in 1696 to Lorraine; 1698, Angers and Tours; 1699, Champagne; 1700, Normandy, which he had already explored in 1684; 1701, a review of the two most celebrated monasteries in France, that of St. Benoît-sur-Loire, and of St. Bernard de Clairvaux. The journey to Lorraine in 1696 was described by Dom Ruinart, who had accompanied him; it is written in Latin, *Iter Lotharingicum*, and appeared in the third volume of the *Oeuvres posthumes de Mabillon et Ruinart* (1724).

Mabillon as a literary pilgrim, diligently exploring libraries and archives, is no less interesting or entertaining, than as an unobtrusive monk, tirelessly working on his ponderous tomes in the seclusion of his cell. He had at all times one object in view, one all-consuming passion—truth and the advancement of science.

²¹ Cf., Valery, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 300; Broglie, *op. cit.*, II, p. 311.

CHAPTER VII

THE TRAITÉ DES ÉTUDES MONASTIQUES

On his return to France from Italy in July, 1686, Mabillon eagerly looked forward to several years of undisturbed peace and quiet, in order to devote his remaining years to prayer and study. But he was to be sadly disappointed. The last years of his life were to be the most active of his long career. No sooner had he stepped on French soil, than he was drawn into one of the most celebrated, as well as the most bitter, controversies of his life, and, distasteful though these disputes were to him, he had a share in many of them.

In 1683 a book had appeared entitled: *La Sainteté et les devoirs de la vie monastique*. Its author was the celebrated Abbé de Rancé, founder of the Reformed Trappist Cistercians. Born in Paris of a noble and powerful family of Normandy, Armand Jean Le Bouthillier de Rancé (1626-1700), when still a child, had been destined for the ecclesiastical state. At the early age of ten, he was commendatory abbot of three abbeys, including La Trappe in Mortagne, prior of two priories, and a canon of Notre-Dame of Paris. Exceptionally brilliant in his studies, when only twelve years of age he made a highly praised translation of Anacreon. Having entered the seminary, he was most successful, and gained renown for himself by defeating Bossuet at the baccalaureate in theology. Following his ordination to the priesthood, in 1651, de Rancé gave himself up to a worldly career in the court of Louis XIV. He possessed a fiery, high-strung temperament, and his vivaciousness was most acceptable to the pleasure-loving nobility of seventeenth-century France.

Many explanations have been offered for his sudden conversion, all more or less lacking sufficient proof. But the fact was, de Rancé retired in 1662 to his Abbey of La Trappe in Mortagne. Becoming regular abbot in 1664, he instituted a severe reform of his monastery, and succeeded by his admonitions and his own example in effecting a return to the primitive observance of the

rule. His monks were deprived of the most innocent amusements, and were forbidden to indulge in any study other than the reading of the Scriptures and a few moral treatises. Urged on by the same vivacity of spirit that had distinguished him in the world, de Rancé was not content with the reform of the single monastery of La Trappe. He eagerly desired to have his idea imposed on the whole Order of Cîteaux. But in this he failed, and was obliged to rest content within his own abbey. Firmly convinced, however, that, what he considered to be the ideal of religious perfection was the only acceptable form of this ideal, he wrote his treatise: *La Sainteté et les devoirs de la vie monastique*. It was not immediately published, but somehow Bossuet, obtaining a copy unknown to the author, and seeing in it a means of renewing ecclesiastical order and of exciting the laity to penance and Christian perfection, insisted on its publication. De Rancé, because of his complete transformation of life, and because of the austere life he was now leading, had become the object of universal admiration. Bossuet, one of his ardent admirers, referred to him as "another St. Bernard." Naturally a book coming from such a man would arouse the keenest interest.

In his book, de Rancé supposes himself questioned by a disciple in love with monastic perfection, and to each question he gives a direct answer. In this way, it is a kind of catechism of the Religious Life. Carried away by religious zeal, he pleads for the most rigorous asceticism, permitting only prayer, the chanting of psalms, manual labor and perpetual silence. Study is condemned as the greatest obstacle to a life of abnegation and renunciation to which the monks had vowed themselves, and moreover, it is directly contrary to the spirit of their primordial institution. A singular talent and fire animate the entire work. Its appearance caused a lively sensation, especially among the various Religious Orders, all of which accorded a more or less important place to studies. But none felt the shock more than the members of the Congregation of Saint-Maur. Study was one of their principal purposes, in fact the *raison d'être* of their existence. De Rancé's book therefore was a direct challenge to, an unqualified denial of, their right to existence. A defense was necessary, and the one man in their ranks, who combined at

the same time sincere piety and eminent learning, was appointed to the task—Dom Mabillon.

A mutual feeling of affection and esteem had existed for several years between Mabillon and de Rancé. The latter had several times consulted Mabillon on obscure points in the Rule, and at one time had invited him to visit La Trappe.¹ Mabillon accordingly was loath to take up his pen against the saintly abbot. However, he privately sent him a few observations in manuscript, and as his trip to Italy came at this time, his attention was drawn to other things for over fifteen months.² He hoped that in the meantime there would be no further need of his writing. In this, as subsequent events will show, he was very much mistaken.

In order to answer the many protestations of Religious Orders, and perhaps influenced to some extent by the observations sent to him by Mabillon, de Rancé under the auspices of Bossuet published in 1685 a volume of *Eclaircissements*, in explanation of his previous work; he enunciates the same principles, although more moderate in tone, and repeats what he had said before in his first book, that study, save in certain exceptional cases, is injurious to religious. This book was more offensive to the Maurists than the first had been, and they were at a loss to know what to do. De Rancé was sponsored by the eminent Bossuet, and to oppose the oracle of the Church in France was dangerous. The attack on studies had been made in the name of the most celebrated of monastic rules, that of St. Benedict. It was therefore decided to approach de Rancé indirectly by means of a commentary on the Rule. The Maurist defense appeared in 1687 under the title: *Commentaire sur la Règle de Saint Benoît*. Its author, Dom Mège, proved in it from the best authorities that study was permitted the Benedictines. When this work was called to the attention of Bossuet, he, as judge of all religious controversies, condemned it as dangerous, and ordered the Superior General of the Congregation of Saint-Maur to forbid its distribution. The Superior General promised to do whatever the bishop of Meaux desired; but, in the meantime, the com-

¹ Cf., Broglie, *Mabillon*, Paris, 1888, Vol. II, p. 113: a letter from de Rancé to Mabillon dated September 11, 1679.

² Cf., H. Didio, "La querelle de Mabillon et l'abbé de Rancé," in the *Revue des sciences ecclésiastiques*, 1892.

mentary was quickly distributed and the blame placed on the publisher. Bossuet was not one to be trifled with. He then issued a threat, and the unfortunate commentary was suppressed by the General Chapter of 1689, which also appointed Dom Martène to prepare another commentary that would be less offensive.

After considerable hesitation and delay, Mabillon finally brought himself to the distasteful task of preparing a refutation. He was spurred on by the entreaties of his confrères, as well as by his own desire to defend those studies which were so dear to him. When the word went abroad that Mabillon was preparing to attack, the learned world was immediately on the alert. For Mabillon and de Rancé were regarded everywhere as the two greatest exponents of monasticism of their day, and a polemic between two such men promised something unusual and interesting. When de Rancé heard that Mabillon was to oppose him, he was not a little surprised and waited with some anxiety.³

In 1691 appeared the *Traité des études monastiques, divisé en trois parties; avec une liste des principales difficultés qui se rencontrent en chaque siècle dans la lecture des originaux, et un catalogue de livres choisis pour composer une bibliothèque ecclésiastique*. This does not seem at first glance to be a refutation, since Mabillon does not directly attack the thesis of de Rancé. His manner of procedure is somewhat similar to that employed in his controversy with the Jesuit Papebroch, that is, he does not take up the statements and objections of his opponent, de Rancé, and answer them directly, but simply presents an eloquent treatise on monastic studies, in which several principles directly contrary to those of his adversary are stated and proved. In an epistle, placed at the head of the volume, Mabillon dedicates the work to young Benedictine religious, expressing

³ In a letter to M. l'abbé Nicaise, de Rancé says: "On attend avec impatience l'ouvrage du Père Mabillon sur les études. Je ne doute pas qu'il n'y ait beaucoup d'érudition. On peut montrer que presque dans tous les temps, il y a eu des solitaires habiles et savants; mais pour un de cette qualité il y en a cinquante mille qui ont vécu avec les seules connaissances qui convenaient à leur profession et qui étaient capables de les sanctifier. Je ne mérite point le bien que vous dites qu'il a écrit de moi. Il est cependant vrai qu'il m'a toujours témoigné de la considération, et que j'ai toujours rendu justice à sa piété et à son mérite dans les sciences." M. Gonod, *Lettres de Rancé*, Paris, 1845, p. 199; also Broglie, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 115.

the hope that it will be of use to them in carrying out the life to which God had called them. He justifies the place given to study in Benedictine monasteries, and supported by tradition, proves that it is a proper element of religious life, in no way destroying or interfering with its perfection.

The treatise is divided into three parts, showing in the first part that the cultivation of letters is not only useful to the religious, but absolutely necessary to his proper development and efficiency. Study is not only not foreign to the monastic spirit, but it is also indispensable to the preservation of religious communities. Mabillon admits that monastic institutions were not established in order to become academies of science, but schools of piety and of virtue. The monks should be wisely instructed in their duties and conduct, and to accomplish this, it is necessary that there should be among them those who study. How can monks elevated to the clerical state be dispensed from study? he asks. Mabillon then shows the necessity of study from the example set by the Basils, Bedes, Anselms and Lanfrances; also from the declarations of Councils, the common opinion of the Fathers, and the constant practice of the oldest monasteries.

In the second part, the important one in the treatise, Mabillon enumerates those studies which he considers best fitted for monks, and the method they may adopt in pursuing them. They should, of course, read the Scriptures and the Fathers with the proper dispositions, in order to derive profit from them. Mabillon attaches the greatest importance to history, and does not fear to say with Melchior Cano that "theologians who are not well-versed in history, do not deserve the name of theologians," and, with Godeau that "*plusieurs scolastiques, pour n'avoir pas su l'histoire, sont tombés dans de très grandes fautes qui ont donné lieu à leurs adversaires de les taxer de mauvaise foi ou d'ignorance.*" The treatise has a place in the history of methodology because of this eighth chapter, where Mabillon sets down considerations which should guide the reader of history:

One should read trustworthy historians as far as possible; that is, historians who are honest, unbiased, and accurate. But since one must often use prejudiced historians, for want of better, a reader should learn how to distinguish the true and the false in their writings. But how may one know

what historians are trustworthy? Ascertain before all else whether an historian is not a mere copyist, but an original, contemporary authority—though, to be sure, a copyist is not to be despised if he has corrected or explained an original authority, or if the original authority has been lost. Then, one should look for a certain honesty (*probité*) in an historian, a quality which makes him incapable of wishing to impose on his readers by assuring them that he has seen or heard when he had neither seen nor heard what he records. Again, one should give preference to historians who have critical ability. It is not enough that a historian should not be a liar: he must possess judgment and accuracy, so as not on the one hand to believe and on the other not to disbelieve too readily.⁴

In chapters eighteen to twenty-one, Mabillon gives his opinion of theology, its object, and the method of teaching it. He recommends the *Summa* of St. Thomas, although he considers it a little too long. But since the time of this great Doctor, Scholasticism has degenerated into a vain subtilty and base chicanery unworthy of the seriousness of Christian schools. It is not necessary therefore to study those useless questions which serve neither to defend the faith nor to regulate conduct. He deplores the fact that theology has been disfigured by so many impractical questions, and that in place of theological reasonings, others have been substituted that are sometimes pitiable and puerile. He suggests that they speak of beatitude, certainly, but do so without stopping too long, as is usually done, disputing whether the essence of formal beatitude consists in an act of the intellect or of the will. As to the casuists, Mabillon has no patience with them; they have subtilized up to the point of losing their reason. To study them is dangerous. Whoever desires to be instructed in Christian morality, would derive more profit in reading the offices of Cicero, than in perusing the shameful rantings of the casuists.⁵

In the third part, Mabillon discusses the principal ends the monk should propose to himself in the cultivation of learning. These are—a knowledge of the truth, and charity, or love of

⁴ Allen Johnson, *The Historian and Historical Evidence*, New York, 1926, p. 105.

⁵ This second section of the treatise on method has been summarized by Dom Besse in a small work, entitled, *Les Études Ecclésiastiques d'après le méthode de Mabillon*, Paris, 1900.

justice. "If there is anyone in the world who should confine his science to charity and the love of justice, surely it is the monk, who, having renounced by his religious profession all the pretensions of the world, would be the most unhappy of men, if the works he undertakes for science do not lead him to charity." He then points out the obstacles which impede the acquiring of a knowledge of truth and the possession of charity. There is also a list of the principal difficulties encountered in a study of the Councils, of the Fathers, and ecclesiastical history, along with the names of authors who have explained them. At the end of the treatise, Mabillon adds a catalogue of books which he considers useful, forming a sort of ecclesiastical library. This list is very remarkable in its simplicity and breadth, especially from the fact that Mabillon enumerates many works written by non-Catholics, something not usually done in those days, so close to the time of the so-called Reformation.

The *Traité des études monastiques* is written in that simple, unpretentious style, so characteristic of all of Mabillon's work; there is no effort to be florid or ornate. It is this simplicity and naïveté, more than anything else that make the book so charming. In his *Vie de Rancé* (p. 205), Chateaubriand says: "Il n'y a aucune éloquence dans la *Traité des études monastiques* opposé aux sentiments de Rancé, mais une raison supérieure, une mansuétude touchante, je ne sais quoi qui gagne le coeur." As soon as it was published, Mabillon was overwhelmed with letters of felicitation.⁶ Fléchier hastily despatched his approval and congratulations, and he was followed by many other members of the French hierarchy.⁷ Cardinals d'Aguirre, Colloredo, and Casanata, in the rather pompous Latin of the Roman Curia, wrote Mabillon of their joy in seeing Letters so ably defended. Huet, Bishop of Avranches, offered this tribute of praise:

Je suis ravi que vous ayez entrepris de désabuser ceux à qui on a voulu persuader depuis quelques années que l'ignorance est une qualité nécessaire à un bon religieux. Je suis dans un lieu où j'ai vu soutenir cette maxime, si favor-

⁶ Many of these letters were published in the *Histoire de la contestation sur les études monastiques*, printed in the first tome of the *Oeuvres posthumes de Mabillon*, Paris, 1724, p. 391 sq., by Dom Vincent Thuillier.

⁷ Fléchier, Bishop of Nîmes, was prominent in ecclesiastical and literary circles of the seventeenth century; he was the author of several works on history and theology, and was renowned as a powerful preacher.

able à la fainéantise des cloîtres, qui est la mère du relâchement. J'ai beau alléguer votre exemple, et celui de tant illustres confrères que vous avez, si dignes de l'habit et du titre qu'ils portent. Votre ouvrage les pourra désabuser, si je puis obtenir qu'ils le veuillent lire; mais quand on aime son mal, on en fuit les remèdes.⁸

The first edition of the book was soon exhausted, and a second was printed the following year, 1692. Various translations were made, so that it soon reached Germany and Italy. P. Udalric Staudigl, a Benedictine of St. Andechs in Bavaria, translated it into Latin, which he published in 1702. Another Latin translation was made by P. Herman Skenck, librarian of Saint-Gall in Switzerland. An Augustinian, P. Nicolas Jerome Ceppi, translated the second part into Italian, with the list of difficulties, and printed it at Rome in 1701 under the title: *La Scuola Mabilloniana*.

Mabillon's work was highly recommended everywhere, and copies of it were placed in many seminaries and houses of Religious Orders, to serve as a guide or manual. In an Encyclical Letter to the Archbishops, Bishops and Clergy of France, on September 8, 1899, His Holiness, Pope Leo XIII earnestly recommends fidelity to those traditional methods of past centuries which formed many eminent men of whom the Church of France is proud. Among these French glories, the Sovereign Pontiff mentions Dom Jean Mabillon and his method as outlined in the *Traité des études monastiques*. This treatise indeed raised Mabillon to an incomparable position among the French savants of the seventeenth century. It was the means of bringing to the fore both his virtues as a religious, and his knowledge as a scholar, and at the same time it contributed immensely to the fund of Catholic pedagogical lore.

In spite of the universal acclamation accorded Mabillon's work, the saintly abbot of La Trappe was highly indignant. His passionate nature rebelled at the fact that his ideas and opinions were contradicted and opposed.⁹ His numerous friends urged him to defend himself, and in less than eight months after

⁸ *Oeuvres posthumes de Mabillon*, Vol. I, p. 392.

⁹ In a letter to M. l'abbé Nicaise, de Rancé said: "Je ne vous dirai rien du livre du Père Mabillon, si ce n'est que je voudrais bien qu'il eût employé son temps et sa plume à quelque autre chose. On ne manquera point d'user mal de ce qu'il a dit." Broglie; *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 128.

the publication of the *Traité*, appeared de Rancé's *Réponse au Traité des études monastiques*. He states in the preface that he had at first written this reply solely for the benefit of his own religious at La Trappe, but on the advice of friends, he is also submitting it to the public. Some idea of de Rancé's style and the nature of the work itself may be had from the following lines of the preface:

Je vous avoue que ce qui me fait le plus de peine, dans l'obligation où je suis de vous expliquer mes pensées sur ce sujet afin de vous préserver d'une opinion qui m'a paru si dangereuse, c'est que j'estime et que je considère celui qui a composé cet ouvrage, et qu'il s'attire une recommandation particulière par la vertu comme par la doctrine. Cependant, quand je fais réflexion que si le père de famille ne trouve pas dans son troupeau toute l'utilité qu'il en a espérée, il s'en prendra à celui à qui il en a confié le gouvernement et la conduite, et que Jésus-Christ, ce souverain Pasteur, recherchera dans la main des Supérieurs le sang des âmes dont il leur a donné la direction et la charge, il faut que toute considération cède au devoir pressant où je me trouve d'examiner cet ouvrage et de vous faire voir d'une manière si évidente et si claire le dommage et le préjudice qui vous en peuvent revenir, que si jamais il tombe entre vos mains, il ne fasse sur vous aucune impression qui soit contraire aux instructions que nous avons données et aux sentiments dans lesquels vous avez été élevés. . . .¹⁰

The same zeal and vehemence persist throughout the book, proving that at least in one instance science was not altogether useless or injurious in a monk. This evident contradiction was remarked by many of de Rancé's readers, and it was given expression a few years later by M. de Boze in his eulogy of Mabillon, when he said that M. de la Trappe had pleaded against monastic studies "avec un art qui décelait le fruit de ses études."

The reply of de Rancé was well received. His friends were flattered, his enemies furious. He himself says in another letter to M. l'abbé Nicaise:

Au reste, je serais très-fâché que le livre que je vous ai envoyé ne tombât pas entre vos mains: vous verrez une réponse précise au livre contre lequel j'ai été obligé d'écrire;

¹⁰ Cf., Broglie, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 131.

et je suis fort assuré que vous entrerez dans toutes mes raisons, car enfin il faut que chacun demeure dans son état. Que l'on fasse ce que l'on voudra pour confondre la condition des moines avec celle des ecclésiastiques, elles sont distinctes et séparées dans l'ordre de Dieu et dans l'institution première. Je n'ai jamais pu comprendre que les moines, solitaires de profession, fussent destinés pour prêcher et pour instruire les peuples, et s'ils se sont trouvés quelquefois dans ces deux sortes de fonctions, ça a été par une vocation extraordinaire. . . .¹¹

Bossuet wrote to de Rancé expressing his satisfaction, and congratulating him on his new endeavor. But evidently he did not agree with everything that de Rancé had said, for in a letter to someone who had consulted him, the Bishop of Meaux states: "Although I have approved the book of M. de la Trappe, this does not imply that I approve all of his ideas; it is sufficient that the book be useful to receive my approbation."¹²

Mabillon had been ill with pleurisy when de Rancé published his reply. The Benedictines of the Maurist Congregation were justly irritated by several pages of reckless accusations contained in the reply, and maintained that the honor of the community and of the Order should be avenged. Mabillon had never personally attacked the Abbot of La Trappe, whereas in this new book he was directly scored and his opinions refuted one by one. A personal reply was therefore necessary. But Mabillon again hesitated, and it was not until commanded by M. le Chancelier Boucherat, that he prepared a defense. It was publicly announced that Mabillon would reply to de Rancé, and this caused quite a disturbance throughout the kingdom. Even the French nobles at court were interested and news of the proceedings reached the King himself. Dom Thuillier in his account of the controversy, tells the following: "M. Pussort, conseiller d'Etat, dit un jour au Roi, devant toute la cour et en présence de M. le chancelier, qu'il ne pouvait souffrir le vif du Père abbé qui avait jeté des pierres à D. Mabillon, de qui il n'avait reçu que des roses, et ce fut en cette occasion que le Roi dit que Mabillon passait dans son esprit pour le plus savant et le plus humble religieux de son royaume."¹³

¹¹ Cf., Gonod, *Lettres de Rancé*, Paris, 1845, p. 83.

¹² Bossuet, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. of Versailles, 1819, t. XXIV, p. 331.

¹³ Thuillier, *Oeuvres posthumes de Mabillon*, Paris, 1724, Vol. I, p. 373.

The many friends of de Rancé were surprised and vexed to hear that the gentle and lovable Maurist historian was preparing a reply. Every effort was made to prevent it, the most forceful and insistent coming from de Rancé's enthusiastic and powerful friend and ally, Madame la duchesse de Guise, a granddaughter of Henry IV. She personally visited the abbey of St. Germain-des-Prés in an attempt to win over Mabillon's superiors. They were very respectful but absolutely refused to take any measures against Mabillon.

In September, 1692, appeared Mabillon's *Réflexions sur la Réponse de M. l'abbé de la Trappe au Traité des études monastiques*. It is written with his accustomed simplicity, although in this work he seems to have caught some of the fire and spirit of his adversary, and at times becomes truly eloquent and impassioned. But humility, sweetness and moderation pervade the entire work. This in itself is to be greatly admired, considering the violent manner of de Rancé's attack. In the preface Mabillon declares that the Abbot of La Trappe many times attributes opinions to him which he never had. To the criticism that he had written against his own conviction, Mabillon modestly replies:

I feel very much removed from writing anything against my thought. I hope God will never abandon me to that extent where complacency and flattery would influence me in maintaining an opinion "contre ma propre conviction." It is possible for me to fall into error, as well as anyone else; I could even fall into contradictions; but that I should write "contre ma propre conviction," I hope with the grace of God, that that will never happen to me.

Mabillon then shows that all the reasons and arguments de Rancé uses against the studies of monks, are the very ones that William of St. Amour advanced against the Mendicant Orders, and which were so thoroughly refuted by St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure. Repeating what he had already said in his treatise, he maintains that the older rules, including that of St. Benedict, approved of studies. And even granting that they did not, the Church who changes in her discipline, has ordained and approved studies in monasteries, as well as in those Religious Orders of the new Reforms, in order to banish from them those vices which ignorance and idleness had introduced. De Rancé

in his *Réponse* had accused the intellectuals of St. Germain-des-Prés of being religious in name only, and of sacrificing lightly the Rule for their precious studies. He likewise reproaches those religious, occupied by order of their superiors on lengthy works, with being too freely and easily dispensed from the common observances; adding, that in communities given over to study, the rule is not well known and therefore not well observed, and in place of silence, a spirit of distraction and commotion prevails. Mabillon with wonderful meekness and constraint replies, that to speak thus of monasteries in general and without distinction is to do a grave injustice to those communities where study is pursued with edification. "For," says he, "to speak only of our own Congregation, there are very few monasteries that work for the public, the principal house being St. Germain-des-Prés. Of the fifty religious who form this community, about twelve are occupied in that kind of work. Of these twelve, there are a few who do not dispense themselves from any choral exercise, either day or night, although their work is very considerable; the others have no exemption other than the scholars, that is, from Matins, Prime, and Compline, respectively. Besides, they have no dispensation from the common regularities; and I can well say without doing an injustice to others, and I call to witness all those who know them, that they are not the least regular, nor the least submissive, nor finally the least edifying of the community."¹⁴

The *Réflexions* of Mabillon was the last volume contributed to the discussion. De Rancé had prepared and was ready to publish a virulent attack, but was prevented from this by Cardinal le Camus and a few intimate friends.¹⁵ Also at this time occurred the most touching episode of the dispute, an event which further influenced de Rancé in not publishing his latest attack. At the instigation of Madame de Guise, Mabillon visited La Trappe on May 28, 1693. The details of this visit are given by Mabillon himself in a letter, too long to quote here, to Dom Estiennot, written on June 15, 1693.¹⁶ Having assisted at the

¹⁴ Cf., Tassin, *Histoire littéraire de la Congregation de S. Maur*, Paris, 1770, pp. 253-254.

¹⁵ Didio, *loc. cit.*, p. 362 ss., gives a résumé of de Rancé's unpublished work according to the manuscript of Grenoble. Cf., Tassin, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

¹⁶ This letter is given by Broglie, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 179.

Divine Office of Corpus Christi with the Trappists, Mabillon retired to a cell where de Rancé was waiting for him. They affectionately embraced each other with every indication of mutual cordiality and esteem. De Rancé was very much impressed by the deep piety and humility of Mabillon, and later, writing to M. l'abbé Nicaise, he said: "Le Père Mabillon est venu . . . il est malaise de trouver tout ensemble plus d'humilité et plus d'érudition que dans ce bon père."¹⁷

A fitting ending to so celebrated a discussion. Mabillon had been called on to defend the truth, his Order and his confrères, and he acquitted himself in a praiseworthy manner. His own generation recognized this and was not slow in openly manifesting its approval and acclaim. M. Arnauld, a celebrated theologian of that day, when consulted on this famous polemic, replied that one could not disapprove of M. l'abbé de la Trappe making rules for his own house; "but to insist that his conduct should serve as a rule for other religious, and that they should be obliged to conform themselves to his regulations, as if not to be a scholar was essential to the monastic state and to the rule of St. Benedict, this does not seem just."¹⁸

The following words of the illustrious German philosopher, Leibnitz, who followed the entire discussion, may be appropriately quoted in concluding the subject:

Il est indubitable que les monastères ont été autrefois comme des écoles d'où sont sortis d'excellentes évêques et autres hommes insignes. Sans les monastères, presque tous les manuscrits des anciens seroient perdus et les sciences avec eux. Je considère les sciences comme un précieux instrument pour exalter la gloire de Dieu. . . . Il est bon qu'il y ait toutes sortes d'état dans l'Eglise; cette variété est belle et utile. Il est bon que M. de la Trappe nous ressuscite les grands exemples des solitaires dont il semble qu'on commençoit à manquer. Il faut aussi des moines savans. Ainsi j'estime que M. de la Trappe et le R. P. Mabillon ont raison tous deux de les exhorter tant à la solide dévotion qu'à la véritable science.¹⁹

¹⁷ Cf., Jadart, in *Travaux de l'Académie de Reims*, Vol. LXIV, p. 100.

¹⁸ Tassin, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

¹⁹ This letter of Leibnitz to M. l'abbé Nicaise, is cited in Dubois, *Histoire de l'abbé de Rancé*; also Jadart, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

CHAPTER VIII

THE "UNKNOWN SAINTS"

In the seventeenth century the veneration of relics occupied an important place in the devotions of the faithful. Letters were continually being sent to Rome from all parts of the Christian world requesting relics of some saint or martyr, and every effort was made to satisfy these requests. This seemingly inexhaustible generosity aroused Mabillon's historical sense, for he recalled having seen a letter written by Otgar, Archbishop of Mayence, in the ninth century, to Pope Gregory IV making a similar request. The Pope, after a diligent search of the Roman cemeteries, had declared himself unable to fulfill the request. During his sojourn in Rome, Mabillon had noticed that in spite of constant admonitions of popes and congregations, excavations in the Catacombs were carelessly made, and that bodies discovered there were considered to be those of saints and were being sent as such to foreign countries without a sufficient study of their authenticity. The fact that a body was taken from the Catacombs did not necessarily make it the body of a saint or martyr. It was the general opinion of scholars that these cemeteries were not reserved for the bodies of saintly confessors and martyrs alone, but that all the faithful had been buried there. And even in the early ages of the Church, not all Christians were saints. Some further proof than mere burial in the Catacombs was therefore necessary to establish the sanctity of the persons buried there. Mabillon urged a more serious study of the names, inscriptions, and various other objects found in the tombs than had previously been made, and began a thorough investigation of his own.

He learned that the principles used to determine the genuineness of the relics of martyrs had been formulated in a decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites in 1668, namely, that every tomb containing a palm and a vial tintured with blood could be considered with certainty as belonging to a confessor of the faith. Entering the Catacombs in person, he examined the ob-

jects found in the interior of the tombs as well as the inscriptions and devices on the exterior. On most of the tombs the monogram of Christ and other Christian symbols were to be found, but many of the inscriptions had no religious signification whatever, as for example, *Ursinus cum conjuge Leontia*. A few inscriptions were evidently pagan in origin, and began with the formula *dīs manibus*. Palms were found to be engraved with some of these inscriptions and symbols.

In the interior of the tombs were found some vases of clay, containing the ashes of burned charcoal, and some tombs yielded up glass vials with a thin cake or crust of reddish color. From the observation of these facts, Mabillon proceeded to determine their signification. He concluded that the pagan inscriptions could have been engraved by unlettered Christians, and therefore did not necessarily denote a pagan origin. But he did not conclude too hastily that the crust contained in the glass vials was a vestige of human blood. The same crust was found in the clay vessels which, according to the generally accepted opinion, had never contained blood but had been used for burning incense. Since the early Christians were accustomed to bring perfumes into the tombs, he conjectured that these glass vials might have been used for that purpose. The palm seemed to him, as to Papebroch, to represent the cypress, and therefore to be the symbol, not of martyrdom, but of death. In his *Annales*, Baronius described the epitaph of Flavia Jovina, daughter of the consul Flavius Jovinus;¹ on this epitaph there is a monogram of Christ in the midst of a garland of laurels and two palms, and moreover, this young girl was described as a neophyte, buried in peace on September 21. In this case the palms and the name of Jesus proved neither martyrdom nor sanctity. From these reflections Mabillon concluded that although the bones found in the Catacombs were indeed those of Christians, only those could with certitude be considered the bones of martyrs near which was found an express attestation of sufferings endured for the faith, and therefore every vial which had once contained human blood could be accepted as an indication of martyrdom.

Mabillon's next inquiry concerned the "cavatores," the men employed in the Catacombs. He was surprised to learn that no

¹ Baronius, *Annales*, ad ann. 367.

discernment whatever guided their search for relics. They gathered together without scruple bones from all the tombs indiscriminately, washed them, and sent them to the Cardinal Vicar or the Master of the Sacred Palace, who gave them a saint's name and distributed them to the churches of Christendom. The saints to whom fictitious names were given were commonly called "baptized saints." Confusion at times arose when to these new saints were given the names of recognized saints. Strange abuses had grown up in regard to these unknown saints. The learned Jesuit, Papebroch, while on a visit to the monastery of Classe, in Ravenna, paused to honor the bones of a saint deposited under the high altar. He was informed that it was the body of St. Argiride, a Greek wife and martyr, whose feast was kept each year on the twenty-fourth of April. Papebroch read the inscription, written in Greek, "Trophyme, husband, to Argiride, his very dear spouse, who lived thirty-six years." He advised the religious to remove the slab from view, lest it scandalize those acquainted with Greek. When the archbishop of Ravenna learned of Papebroch's opinion, he consulted the Congregation of Indulgences, and was told that it was necessary not only to remove the stone, but also to return the body to the Cardinal who had given it to the monastery, since there was no proof of martyrdom.

In his *Iter Italicum* Mabillon tells of a church in Spain which petitioned Pope Urban VIII for a grant of indulgences on the feast of St. Viar, whose body it claimed to possess. The Pope ordered an investigation, and the only evidence submitted for the existence of St. Viar was a stone with the Roman letters S. VIAR. A careful examination soon showed that this stone did not cover the remains of a saint, but only recalled a bit of Roman antiquity. When the missing letters of the inscription were supplied it read: *praefectus VIARum*.²

On returning to Paris in 1686, Mabillon decided that in order to avoid causing scandal he would do nothing in regard to the abuses he had observed in Rome, yet new facts kept coming to his attention, to prove that the evil continued unchecked. He learned that the Theatines of Paris had received the relics of an alleged martyr, St. Attien, on whose tomb the inscription was

² Cf., Johnson, Allen, *The Historian and Historical Evidence*, New York, 1926, p. 130.

limited to an indication that his spouse owed him a great debt of gratitude. He discovered that the Augustinians of Toulouse venerated as a martyr a woman whose inscription read "Aux dieux mânes. Julia Evodia, daughter, has dedicated this monument of gratitude to her chaste mother, who lived seventy years." The unseemly aspect of the situation was that Julia Evodia was being honored, and not her chaste mother. Again, Mabillon learned that a certain church in Paris had requested relics from Rome and had received the head of a martyr. After venerating it for a short period, the recipients, in order to satisfy a feeling of uneasiness regarding the authenticity of the relic, summoned eminent medical men to examine it. The latter quickly recognized the head as that of an animal.³

This incident so aroused Mabillon that he decided the only way to prevent a recurrence of such scandals was to denounce them publicly. Accordingly, he wrote a treatise on the abuse of relics in 1691, but did not publish it immediately. He showed it to his superiors and to a few intimate friends, and finally submitted it to Duguet, a renowned theologian of the time. The latter approved it and urged Mabillon to publish it: "L'Eglise avait besoin de cette espèce d'apologie contre les étrangers et de cette instruction pour ces enfants."⁴ In spite of these encouragements, Mabillon feared scandal and had no desire to face fresh polemics. For seven years the work remained in manuscript.

In 1696 Mabillon wrote to Cardinal Colloredo, pleading the cause of the Bollandists who were then being persecuted by the Spanish Inquisition, and took advantage of the occasion to request the Cardinal to review the work he had written on "unknown saints." The Cardinal accepted, and the work was sent to him under a pledge of secrecy. On August 29, 1696, Mabillon received the Cardinal's answer in which he expressed

³ Mabillon to Cardinal Colloredo: "Unicum hic affero a multis testibus in hac parisiaca urbe observatum. Allatum erat quoddam caput quod s. martyris esse dicebatur; adhibitis ad illud probandum chirurgis . . . quod a viro fide dignissimo qui testis adfuit accepi." A note explains that "his ministrorum secundariorum fraudibus velamen prætendere satius visum est, ne hinc ansam capiant segreges fratres nostri dieteriis lacessendi romanam Ecclesiam." *Oeuvres Posthumes de Mabillon*, Paris, 1724, Vol. I, p. 359.

⁴ Mabillon's correspondence in the Bibliothèque Nationale, *fond français*, 19652, fol. 115.

himself as greatly dissatisfied, strongly urging Mabillon not to publish his treatise.⁵ The Cardinal's decision delayed publication of the treatise for over eighteen months, but as Mabillon had been obliged to communicate a knowledge of the contents to so many persons, and feared infidelity on the part of some of them, the work was finally given to the printer. It appeared early in 1698 with the title *Eusebii Romani ad Theophilum Gallum Epistola de cultu sanctorum ignotorum*.⁶

Mabillon's purpose in the work was to lay down rules which could be applied in distinguishing the bones of martyrs from those of the other faithful. It was the first time a scientific treatment had been given to the subject, yet Mabillon's suggestions have been retained and adopted by modern archeologists, notably by De Rossi. In discussing the abuses which he knew to exist, Mabillon used the utmost precaution and circumspection. Wherever he could avoid the possibility of giving scandal, he did so.⁷ The Sovereign Pontiffs and the higher officials of the Curia were absolved from blame, and Mabillon directed his charges against the minor officials, in whom he found an over-eagerness to recognize the authenticity of relics without sufficient examination. He recalled the opinion given in the ninth century by Gregory IV to Otgar, archbishop of Mayence, and added dryly: "A cette époque on n'avait pas encore l'habitude de baptiser les saints et d'envoyer leur corps comme des vraies reliques." The whole subject was undoubtedly a delicate one, and Mabillon did not approach it without hesitation and fear of the outcome. However, he saw clearly what he considered to be his duty, and he was too upright a character to recoil from it, whatever might be the consequences.

The success of the *Letter of Eusebius* was immediate in France and the author received hearty approval from all sides. A French translation of the *Letter* was issued the same year, 1698, and reprints were made at Brussels, Tours, Grenoble, and

⁵ *Oeuvres Posthumes*, Vol. I, p. 305. Mabillon had originally dedicated the treatise to Cardinal Colloredo, but the latter's decision compelled him to withdraw the dedication.

⁶ Two editions were printed. The 1723 edition of the *Vetera Analecta* gives only the second edition. Thuillier, in the *Oeuvres Posthumes de Mabillon*, Vol. I, p. 213 ss. gives the text of both editions.

⁷ He mentioned the findings of the surgeons of Paris only in a private letter; note 3, *supra*.

Utrecht. An evidence of the approval it received in France is seen in the testimony of Bishop Fléchier of Nîmes, in a letter to Mabillon dated May 2, 1698:

Il falloit qu'un homme aussi éclairé et aussi judicieux que vous l'êtes nous apprit à discerner, dans l'obscurité des sepulchres, les cendres des saints avec celle des pécheurs, et à régler, selon les preuves évidentes ou douteuses, les honneurs qu'on rend quelque fois indifféremment à des ossements incertains comme aux reliques des martyrs. Il y avoit longtemps que je souhaitois qu'on abolit certaines superstitions qui s'introduisent en faveur de ces corps qu'on appelle saints, et qui n'ont peut-être jamais été baptisés. Les peuples sont naturellement crédules. La cour de Rome est quelquefois bien libérale de tels présents. . . . Tous les gens sensés et véritablement pieux voient avec plaisir réfuter solidement les erreurs qui peuvent être l'occasion de superstition, et de décrier au dehors les saintes pratiques de la religion. C'est, ce me semble, un de principaux fruits de l'érudition ecclésiastique; car, comme la superstition est fille de l'ignorance, le principal moyen de la détruire est d'instruire et de répandre la lumière par la connaissance de l'antiquité. C'est en quoi nous serons éternellement redevables à M. de Tillemont, mais c'est aussi en quoi sa perte nous doit être plus sensible.*

Mabillon would have preferred less notoriety than the book received, since he feared it would attract too great attention and thereby wound the feelings of those against whom it was directed. In a letter to his Florentine friend, Magliabecchi, he said: "Je ne sais si vous aurez entendu parler d'une lettre de *cultu sanctorum ignotorum*. Je n'ai osé vous l'envoyer de peur qu'elle ne vous fût pas agréable. Je le ferai aussitôt que j'aurai appris que vous le souhaitez."⁸ When the book reached Rome and began to be circulated, the storm broke. The work was severely criticized, and even the Cardinals best disposed to Mabillon were perplexed by it. In a letter to Mabillon, Dom Estiennot voiced the opinion of Cardinal Casanata:

Il convient de tout ce que vous avancez et croit que vous ne dites rien qui ne soit fort probable. Mais il revient toujours à ce que vos principes posés et établis, ni les reliques

⁸ Fléchier to Mabillon, in *Oeuvres Posthumes de Mabillon*, Vol. I, p. 314.

⁹ Valéry, *Correspondance Inédite de Mabillon*, Paris, 1846, Vol. III, p. 7.

qu'on a retirées ici des catacombs, ni celles qu'on pourra tirer à l'avenir, ne devront être reçues comme véritables. . . . Cela peut donner de grands scruples au delà des monts, particulièrement en Espagne, Allemagne, les Indes, etc., où l'on en envoie tous les jours. . . . Encore un coup, combien y a-t-il d'autres abus qu'on souffre parce qu'on ne saurait les empêcher.

Cardinal Tomasi pledged his support to Mabillon but feared that the book would render all relics suspected. In a letter to Mabillon from Rome, February 24, 1698, Dom Estiennot describes the sentiment there when only a few copies had reached the city:

Je portai à S. A. E. de Bouillon votre dissertation; il la lut, et m'a dit qu'il la trouvait fort savante et fort juste, mais qu'il craignait que les intéressés n'en fissent du bruit. Je lui dis ce que m'en avait dit S. E. Casanata et ce que je vous avais écrit, et vous écrirais encore; il me donna ordre de vous assurer que, en cas de plainte en ce pays-ci, il vous appuierait et vous servirait en bon ami, et que je pouvais vous assurer que rien ne s'y ferait qui pût vous donner quelque chagrin. Je courus ensuite de cela chez S. E. Colloredo pour le prévenir et lui faire lecture de votre lettre. Il y a peu d'exemplaires de votre dissertation dans Rome, qui je sache; je ne doute pas pourtant que M. le nonce n'en ait envoyé au palais, et on commence à en parler, mais cela n'aura pas de suite, à ce que j'espère. Je ferai de mon côté tout ce que vous pouvez attendre d'un bon et véritable ami pour assoupir tout. . . .¹⁰

On this occasion the Jesuits, at other times unfriendly to Mabillon, showed themselves favorable to the *Letter*, although most of the other religious orders condemned it.¹¹ The illustrious Fabretti in charge of the work in the Catacombs was particularly displeased and considered the *Letter* as a personal attack on himself.¹² As he had been on friendly terms with Mabillon during the latter's stay in Rome, he accused the Benedictine of ingratitude. In a letter from Dom Estiennot dated June 3,

¹⁰ *Correspondance des Bénédictins*, Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds Français, 17679, fol. 37.

¹¹ Estiennot to Mabillon, "Les RR.PP. Jésuites estiment fort votre pièce et en sont contents"; cf. *Oeuvres Posthumes*, Vol. I, p. 319.

¹² Cf. p. 66, *supra*.

1698, Mabillon learned that the attacks on his *Letter* were increasing in number and bitterness:

Votre dissertation, mon Révérend et très-cher Père, fait ici de plus en plus du bruit, parce qu'elle y devient publique; on l'examine dans les Académies de la Sapience, Propagande, etc., et M. Fabretti écrit contre, et rapporte entre autres choses une lettre de M. Leibnitz par laquelle il marque ne pas tant douter que vous le faites de la vérité des marques des corps saints qu'on tire des Catacombs. Ce qui fait le plus de peine est que ce soit l'ouvrage du Père M. . . . qu'on a traité ici avec tant de civilités, honnêtetés, distinction, etc.; qui y est aimé, estimé, et qui n'avait nul sujet de faire du chagrin à cette cour. Son Altesse Eminentissime m'en a parlé plus d'une fois en conformité de ce qu'il vous en a écrit. Je ne vous saurais dire encore ce qu'on fera, mais il est fort probable qu'on fera quelque chose. La pierre est jetée, et la chose faite, il n'y a pas de remède. Il faudra attendre ce qu'on fera; on tombe d'accord que vous n'y dites rien que de sage et de vrai, mais on revient toujours que cela ne plaît pas. Cette cour n'en fera ni plus ni moins, *consulto cio*. Cela ne lui plaît pas, *nessuno sorcio non pela il gatto*.¹³

It was decided at Rome to write a refutation of Mabillon's *Letter*, and Fabretti was appointed to the task, but death intervened before he could carry it out. A French ecclesiastic was then charged with the reply, but when it finally appeared, in 1700, little attention was paid to it in Rome. A reply did appear in Cologne in 1698, entitled *Réponse à une lettre de D. Jean Mabillon sur les Saints des Catacombs*, in which an effort was made to show that the *Letter of Eusebius* is opposed to even Benedictine interests, since it destroys the very foundations for many of the relics preserved in Benedictine churches, such as the Holy Tear of Vendôme and the "girdle of St. Margaret" at Saint-Germain-des-Prés. Another criticism of the *Letter* appeared in France, in 1701, from the pen of M. La Benazie, canon of the collegiate church of Agen, written in the form of a dialogue between a missionary and a neophyte, in which the latter, convinced that the saints can be invoked, is puzzled by the principles established by M. de Launoy and *Eusebius*. This criti-

¹³ *Correspondance des Bénédictins*, Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds Français, 17679, fol. 51.

cism, unlike the others, was written with moderation and calmness, and Mabillon seems to have recognized its value.¹⁴

Indignation against Mabillon at Rome increased until there was talk of bringing the *Letter of Eusebius* before the Congregation of the Index. Cardinal Carpegna was particularly bitter against Mabillon. The truth of Mabillon's claims could not be denied, but his enemies in the affair insisted that scandal had been caused. Dom Estiennot and other friends exerted themselves to the utmost in their endeavors to prevent the matter from being brought before the Congregation of the Index. At this time, July, 1698, Mabillon composed a second letter, explanatory of his position, entitled *F. J. Mabillonii commonitoria epistola ad Claudium Estiennot, Procuratorem Generalem Congreg. S. Mauri in curia Romana*, and sent it to Estiennot to be circulated among the officials of the Curia, in an effort to overcome the prejudice against him, and to explain the passages that had given offense. This letter, conciliatory in style, produced good effects, and for a while silenced the opposition. Throughout the storm Mabillon himself had retained his customary composure and serenity. He disliked controversy and declined to answer attacks made on him, trusting to time to heal any wounds that might have been caused. He maintained that, if the officials of the Curia could observe the abuse of relics in France, they would fully understand his position. In many cases more homage was being accorded to these suspected relics than to the greatest saints of the Church.¹⁵

The prolonged silence of Rome had reassured Mabillon, and he dismissed the *Letter of Eusebius* from his thoughts. But the movement against him, led by the Secretary of the Congregation of the Index, Bianchi, was quietly gaining momentum, and finally succeeded in having the *Letter* submitted to the Congregation in April, 1701. When news of this action reached him, Mabillon was taken completely by surprise. The energetic and efficient Estiennot was no longer Procurator-General of the Congregation in Rome, as he had died suddenly on June 20, 1699;

¹⁴ Cf., Nicéron, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des hommes illustres*, Paris, 1724, Vol. VII.

¹⁵ *Oeuvres Posthumes*, Vol. I, p. 345.

in his place was Dom Guillaume Delaparre, who informed Mabillon of the action taken against him:

J'ai reçu la lettre que Votre Révérence me fait l'honneur de m'écrire du 9 de ce mois. J'ai prévenu vos intentions, et ai donné des copies de votre lettre *commonitoria*. Tous les gens savants sont de votre sentiment, et ne peuvent comprendre qu'on condamne votre lettre *De cultu sanctorum ignotorum*. Cependant il est très-assuré qu'elle a été déferée à l'Index. Comme le secrétaire de l'Index est un homme fort extraordinaire, avec qui on ne peut parler sans qu'il ne s'emporte et ne dise des injures, M. l'abbé Renaudot, l'assistant général des Carmes, et moi, en avons parlé au Révérend Père Massolié, lequel n'a pas voulu se charger d'en parler au secrétaire, disant qu'il ne ferait que l'irriter davantage. Pour notre malheur, le Révérend Père Général de Saint-Dominique est à Naples depuis deux mois; il aurait parlé avec plaisir à ce secrétaire. Votre Révérence peut bien croire que je ferai avec vos amis ce que nous pourrions pour empêcher que ce livre ne soit censuré. . . .¹⁶

For two years Mabillon heard nothing more save that many consultations had been held by the Congregation of the Index. In April, 1704, Bianchi was on the point of succeeding in obtaining a decree condemning the *Letter*, when Mabillon's friends again rallied to his support. Cardinals Colloredo, Ottoboni and de Bouillon used their influence to avert the condemnation, but none was more ardent in support of Mabillon than Fontanini, who was highly esteemed by Pope Clement XI, and succeeded in averting the condemnation by bringing the case directly before the Pope.

Clement XI did not approve of the *Letter*, much as he esteemed Mabillon's other work. For him, in the matter of relics, the question of authenticity was a secondary one. Thuillier gives an idea of the Pope's position:

Il se fait, disait ce Saint-Père aux personnes de qui je le sais, il se fait quantité de bonnes oeuvres à l'occasion de ces reliques. Pourquoi en arrêter le cours en jetant des doutes sur les marques dont on se sert pour les distinguer des corps du commun des chrétiens? Quel bien ne se fait pas à Notre-Dame de Lorette? Combien d'oeuvres de pénitence,

¹⁶ *Correspondance des Bénédictins*, Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds Français, 17680, fol. 54.

de communions, d'aumônes? Faut-il empêcher ce bien parce qu'il n'est pas sûr que la chapelle ait été apportée par des anges, comme le croit le peuple? Que la *Scala sancta* soit l'escalier qui était dans la maison de Pilate, cela n'est pas absolument de foi. Cependant je le monte, tout Rome le monte souvent par pénitence et par dévotion.¹⁷

Although this was the opinion of the Pope, he was unwilling to leave the *Letter* in the hands of its enemies, and accordingly reserved to himself personally the examination of it. As a result of this examination Mabillon was instructed to make some revision of the *Letter* for a second edition. He received these instructions in June, 1704, and at once set to work to comply with them. In a letter written at this time he says:

Je viens de réimprimer le *Lettre de Eusébe, de cultu sanctorum ignotorum*, et ce par ordre du Pape, qui m'a ordonné de retoucher cette lettre et d'en faire une seconde édition, ayant suspendu les sollicitations que certaines personnes faisaient pour la faire censurer par la Congrégation de l'Index. Je l'ai donc retouchée sans l'affaiblir en rien, et l'ai augmentée de près de la moitié.¹⁸

The second edition differs from the first principally in two omissions, the question of Gregory IV and Otgar was passed over in silence, and the decree of the Congregation of Rites in 1668, which had been criticized in the first edition, was approved without reservation. In the preface to the second edition, Mabillon reminds his readers that the revision was executed at the express command of the Pope, leaving it to be understood that he himself preferred the first edition.¹⁹

In February, 1705, Mabillon sent the second edition, revised and corrected, to Dom Delaparre, for presentation to the Pope. At the same time he sent the second volume of his new work, the *Annales Ordinis Sancti Benedicti*, and the *Supplément* to the *De Re Diplomatica*. Delaparre wrote to Mabillon on May 26, 1705, describing his visit to Clement XI:

Je viens, mon Révérend Père, tout présentement du palais, où j'ai présenté de votre part le second tome des *Annales de*

¹⁷ *Oeuvres Posthumes de Mabillon*, Vol. I, p. 353.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 355.

¹⁹ "Hæc porro nova editio non temere, nec proprio arbitrio a me facta est, sed ad ejus nutum et imperium penes quem residet summa præcipiendi auctoritas." *Ibid.*, p. 210.

l'Ordre, avec le supplément à la *Diplomatique*. Les choses obligeantes que le Saint-Père a dites de vous font connaître l'estime que Sa Sainteté fait de vos livres. Il m'a dit trois ou quatre fois de vous remercier de sa part. Ensuite il m'a parlé du rapport qu'il avait fait faire de votre second édition de la lettre *Ad Theophilum* à MM. les cardinaux de la Congrégation *del Indice*. Il parlait de cela avec une satisfaction très-grande, et a dit qu'il s'était toujours attendu que vous donneriez dans cette occasion une marque de votre attachement pour le Saint-Siège.²⁰

In June, 1705, the Congregation of the Index unanimously approved the new edition, and Cardinal Ottoboni was appointed to inform Mabillon of the happy termination of the controversy.²¹ Thus ended one of the most unpleasant episodes of Mabillon's career. Throughout the whole affair he had conducted himself in a manner eminently befitting both a scholar and a religious. Speaking of Mabillon's conduct in this affair, Lord Acton remarks: "The historian who says that the finest moments in Church History are the resistance of Luther and the submission of Fénelon might find room for a third type in the example of Mabillon."²²

The *Letter of Eusebius* had drawn attention to the veneration of false relics, and as previously noted, attacks were made on some of the relics preserved in Benedictine churches. A bitter attack was made on the "Holy Tear" of Vendôme in 1699 by the celebrated critic, Jean Baptiste Thiers. Legend had it that this "tear," shed by Christ at the tomb of Lazarus, had been gathered up by an angel, encased in a glass vial, and given to St. Mary Magdalen as a token of the Savior's love for her brother. The vial was alleged to have been carried into France by the Saint, and eventually preserved at Aix, until the reign of Constantine, when it was removed to Constantinople. In the eleventh century it was said to have been brought back to France by the Duke of Vendôme, and permanently located in the Benedictine abbey there. Thiers accused the Benedictines of imposture in exploiting the "Holy Tear," and urged the bishop of Blois to imitate the example of St. Charles Borromeo by suppressing a pious fraud. Mabillon at once took up the defense of

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 366.

²¹ Ottoboni to Mabillon, June 2, *ibid.*, p. 364.

²² Acton, in the *English Historical Review*, Vol. III, p. 590.

the Benedictines of Vendôme and replied to Thiers in his *Lettre d'un Bénédictin à Monseigneur l'Evêque de Blois, touchant le discernement des anciennes Reliques, au sujet d'une dissertation de M. Thiers, contre la sainte Larme de Vendôme*, published at Paris in 1700. It is not to the purpose of this study to enter into the details of this controversy, as it was of but passing moment in Mabillon's life. But a consideration of some of the principles he enunciated therein give an interesting side-light on his work as an historian. Although all his life he had been an energetic defender of historical truth, and a staunch opponent of falsehood and error, it seems that this once he compromised his principles, and although he did not openly defend error, neither did he condemn it outright. De Feller remarks: "Mabillon, partout ailleurs bon critique, paraît dans cet ouvrage trop crédule et peu judicieux."²³

Some of Mabillon's critics accuse him of inconsistency for having written this *Lettre*, in which his purpose appears to be directly contrary to that of the *Letter of Eusebius*. However, a comparison of the two *Letters* will show that the contradiction is only apparent. In the *Letter of Eusebius*, Mabillon directly attacked abuses beginning to exist in some parts of the Church in the veneration of relics not sufficiently authenticated. In the *Letter to the Bishop of Blois*, he attacked the rules given by Thiers for the discernment of true relics, and showed the fallacy of these rules.²⁴ He expressly stated that he was not trying to prove the authenticity of the relic, but was merely intending to show the good faith of his brother-religious of Vendôme. The relic had been the object of veneration for centuries, and its suppression would cause considerable scandal. And he adds naively that there is nothing inherently wrong in venerating false relics which are not known to be such, since the veneration is directed to the true relics of which the false ones are but representations. "That such reasoning as this," remarks Lord Acton, "can have been seriously meant and published by the supreme scholar of the age of Louis XIV is not absolutely impossible, because nothing is impossible to historians, but it is hard to believe. Mabillon was not his own master. He had to consider the credit of

²³ *Biographie Universelle*, Paris, 1845, Vol. 8, p. 3.

²⁴ *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, art. "Mabillon," fasc. 75, col. 1430.

two hundred French monasteries, the feelings and interests of the studious body among whom he lived. To be checked and winnowed by Sammarthanus, Coustant, and Massuet is a servitude we all should envy; but it is not conducive to originality or to integrity, which imply isolation. And there were other ordeals, civil and ecclesiastical, to pass before honest manuscript could get into deceitful type."²⁵

²⁵ Acton, *loc. cit.*, p. 591.

CHAPTER IX

LAST WORKS

The Maurists, in accord with their original plan of giving critical editions of the works of the Fathers, undertook in 1670 an edition of the works of St. Augustine.¹ The Louvain edition of St. Augustine, published in 1577, and based almost exclusively on manuscripts of the Low Countries had proved unsatisfactory. Realizing this, Pope Sixtus V had proposed a new edition, which was begun, but for some reason not ascertained never appeared. When it became known that the Congregation of St. Maur intended to edit the works of the Fathers, the superiors were urged to apply their efforts to the works of St. Augustine.

At a chapter of the Congregation, Dom Claude Martin² proposed the undertaking. After considerable discussion as to the dangers involved at a time when the controversies with Jansenism were waxing strong, the plan was adopted, and Dom Martin charged with its execution. A circular letter was despatched to the different monasteries, and manuscripts were forwarded to Paris. Dom François Delfau was summoned to direct the enterprise, and in 1671 he published an outline of the general plan, *Prospectus des oeuvres de S. Augustin*. The various tasks connected with the edition were then assigned; to Dom Peter Coustant the critical analysis of the writings ascribed to the Saint; to Dom Guesnié the content table; to Dom Nicholas Goysot the printing and correcting of the proofs. The work was proceeding smoothly when Dom Delfau was suddenly exiled to Landevenac, in lower Brittany by a "lettre de cachet," because, as M. de Malan explains, he had written "chrétiennement" of commendatory abbots. Dom Thomas Blampin was appointed to succeed Delfau in directing the work.

¹ Cf. Dom Butler, in *Downside Review*, 1893; Kukula, *Die Mauriner Ausgabe des Augustinus*, Vienna, 1890; A.M.P. Ingold, *Histoire de l'édition Bénédictine de S. Augustin*, Paris, 1903.

² Dom Martin was the son of the Ven. Marie of the Incarnation, celebrated foundress of the Ursuline convent in Quebec, in 1639.

The first volume appeared in 1679, and the tenth in 1690.³ The eleventh and last volume did not appear until 1700, owing to the violent protests made against it by theologians of the "Congruist" school, sometimes, although not correctly, referred to as the Molinist school. The Maurists at first took no notice of these attacks, until several bitter pamphlets were published anonymously during 1698, and alleged to be Jesuit in origin, although the Jesuits professed complete ignorance of the identity of the author. The Benedictines had sufficient reason to suspect the Jesuits, as their mutual relations had never been friendly. In March, 1699, Mabillon, who had written the dedicatory epistle to King Louis XIV in the first volume of the edition of St. Augustine, wrote to Dom Estiennot in Rome, stating that he knew on good authority that there were six Jesuits at the Collège de St. Louis-le-Grand who rigorously examined every work printed by the Congregation.⁴

When the pamphlets continued to appear, Dom Montfaucon was sent to Rome to represent the Congregation before the Holy See and to request the condemnation of the pamphlets. The Procurator General of the Congregation, Dom Delaparré, wrote to Mabillon from Rome that the Pope, Innocent XII, was greatly displeased at the tactics of the opponents of the Congregation, referring to them as disturbers of the peace. With this encouragement, Dom Delaparré presented the ten volumes of St. Augustine already published to the Congregation of the

³ In his bibliography, De Lama gives the following dates for the various volumes, tome IV, 1681; tome V, 1683; tomes VI and VII, 1685; tomes I and II, 1687; tomes VIII and IX, 1688; tome X, 1690; tome XI, 1700. In 1689 tomes I and II were reprinted under the date of 1679.

⁴ Mabillon to Estiennot, March 8, 1699: "Nous savons de bonne part qu'il y a six Jésuites à Saint-Louis qui examinent à la rigueur tous ces ouvrages imprimés par la Congrégation. . . . Cela fait de la peine à nos pères, mais il faut prendre patience; c'est une persécution qui passera, quoique plusieurs évêques se joignent à eux, dont il ne faut pas s'étonner. Cette petite humiliation nous sera utile, et nous apprendra à ne pas s'appuyer beaucoup sur les applaudissements des hommes." Cited by Chavin de Malan, *Histoire de Mabillon*, Paris, 1843, p. 330.

Another time, speaking of the Jesuits who were working against the edition of St. Augustine, Mabillon wrote to one of his confrères in Rome: "Vous userez de la précaution qui est de ne se point déclarer contre les Jésuites. Ils sont, il est vrai, contre nous, et il est juste de se défendre, mais il le faut faire avec de bonnes raisons et les laisser pour ce qu'ils sont pour le reste." Cited by Broglie, *Mabillon*, Paris, 1888, Vol. II, p. 214.

Inquisition. A commission of theologians, with a Carmelite at its head, was appointed to examine the volume together with the hostile pamphlets.

While these negotiations were being carried on in Rome, preparations were being made in Paris for the publication of the last volume. Bossuet⁵ strongly urged the Maurists to add to this last volume a general preface to the whole edition, containing a defense of the points attacked, and a statement of the theological position of the Congregation. Bossuet further suggested that the doctrine of St. Augustine should be set forth as "également opposée à Jansenius et à Molina." To Mabillon, esteemed by all for his learning and piety, was entrusted the task of vindicating the reputation of the Congregation. His first draft, completed in August, 1699, was submitted to several theologians, including Duguet, a conservative Port Royalist. It was then rewritten along the lines of the various criticisms received, and given to Bossuet for his approval.⁶

Meanwhile the pamphlet attacks continued apace until in November, 1699, the Archbishop of Paris summoned the Superior General of the Maurists and the Provincial of the Jesuits and read to them a special decree of King Louis XIV commanding them to forbid their religious to say or write anything more in the controversy, and to suppress all that had already been written on both sides. This royal mandate caused considerable concern among the Maurists in view of the proposed general preface. It was finally decided that the Preface could not be considered as falling under the ban of the King.

When Bossuet returned the Preface to Mabillon, it was filled with corrections and suggestions.⁷ Mabillon, admitting that St. Augustine believed in the doctrine of sufficient grace, stoutly maintained that this view could not be proved from the writings of the Saint. Bossuet insisted that not only sufficient grace but also the antecedent will of God to save all men could be proved

⁵ Many passages of the *Journal de Le Dieu* (I, p. 157, 186, etc.) tell of the part played by Bossuet in the Benedictine edition of St. Augustine.

⁶ These drafts of Mabillon are preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale, *fonds latins*, 11665, and 11666. Ruinart's detailed account of all the circumstances of this affair, which has remained unedited, is also there, *fonds latin*, 11662.

⁷ *Revue Bossuet*, Vol. I, 1900, contains an interesting article on the corrections offered by Bossuet to this Preface of Mabillon.

from the texts of the Bishop of Hippo. The many changes suggested by Bossuet necessitated a complete revision of the Preface, to Mabillon's great annoyance. The whole affair had been distasteful to him from the outset, and he had acquiesced in it only out of obedience to his superiors. "Voilà donc le pauvre D. Mabillon," writes Dom Thuillier,⁸ another historian of this episode in Mabillon's life, "recloué pour le troisième fois sur sa préface. Jamais ouvrage ne lui fit plus de peine. Il en pleuroit de tristesse et de dépit. Il sentit enfin qu'il écrivoit *invita Minerva*. . . . Nouvelles sueurs pour D. Mabillon, nouveaux dégoûts."

While Mabillon was preparing this third draft of the Preface, the Inquisition at Rome, in a decree of June 7, 1700, condemned the principal pamphlets that had been written against the Maurists, and by this action indirectly approved the whole edition. This decree was but an application of the decision of the celebrated *Congregatio de Auxiliis*, which had forbidden the defenders of the different opinions on grace to condemn one another as heretics. Mabillon could now omit as unnecessary the purely contentious portion of the Preface, and the final version, about one-third of the original draft, was soon ready for the approval of Bossuet and the other advisers of the Maurists. In September, 1700, the eleventh volume was published and presented to King Louis XIV.

When it appeared, Mabillon, now almost seventy years of age, betook himself to Normandy, where he remained in seclusion in a monastery to avoid the storm which he felt would inevitably follow. In October, 1700, he wrote to Duguet to inquire the state of the controversy in Paris, and Duguet's answer was far from reassuring. In the Preface Mabillon gave a profession of faith in the name of the Maurists, declaring his adherence to the teachings of the Holy See, especially in regard to the five propositions, taken from the posthumous work of Jansenius, *Augustinus*, and condemned by Pope Innocent X in his constitution *Cum occasione* of May 30, 1653. Mabillon likewise declared his belief in the victorious and efficacious grace described by St. Augustine, without, however, rejecting sufficient grace as understood by the Thomists. The Preface con-

⁸ Thuillier, *Histoire de la nouvelle édition de Saint Augustin*, Paris, 1736, p. 26.

cluded with the expression that the Benedictine edition of St. Augustine contained nothing that was not Catholic, or at least not inspired by Catholic thought, "etsi enim nihil non catholice, certe nihil non catholico animo a nobis dictum sit."

The Preface, as it finally appeared at the head of the eleventh volume of St. Augustine's works, was substantially different from Mabiillon's first draft.⁹ A faithful echo of the teaching of the illustrious Bossuet, the Preface presented Augustinianism in a mitigated form in order to avoid the reef of Jansenism and keep within the limits of orthodoxy. Bossuet's idea was to take a middle course between the partisans of Arnauld and those of Molina. In reality both the Jansenists and the Jesuits were offended. And Mabillon, whose name was the one signed to the Preface, was the special object of their attacks. The Jesuits accused him of Jansenism, and the Jansenists accused him in turn of Molinism. Fénelon, himself a Molinist, in a letter to his clergy, condemned the Preface as "sophistique, illusoire, et envenimée." Quesnel, one of the Jansenist leaders, was equally displeased and drew up a list of twelve points in which he considered the Preface opposed to the true teaching of St. Augustine, as this teaching was viewed by Jansenist theology. Mabillon, in silence and seclusion, bore the brunt of these attacks. As Thuillier says, "Personne ne soupçonnait que Bossuet avait passé par là, et qu'il avait forcé Mabillon à parler contra sa pensée."¹⁰

Pope Clement XI gave an indirect approval to the whole edition when in 1701 he sent his blessing to the entire Congregation "and especially to those who have been and are now engaged in editing the works of the Fathers." Again in 1706 he sent to the Superior General twenty-six gold medals for those who had taken part in preparing the various editions previously brought out. Attacks on the edition of St. Augustine were launched three times in the next thirty years but each time were quickly suppressed by the Holy See.

During this troubled period of Mabillon's life, when he was unwillingly drawn into the theological controversies of the day, he was at the same time engaged on a monumental historical work, one that has often been considered his masterpiece, the

⁹ Cf., Didier, in *Revue des sciences ecclésiastiques*, Lille, 1898.

¹⁰ Thuillier, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

Annales Ordinis Sancti Benedicti. After the discussion with the Abbé de Rancé on the propriety of monastic studies, Mabillon felt that only a few years more of life could remain to him, and he desired to devote these years to a serious, undisturbed preparation for death. His desire and resolution were a blow to his confrères and superiors, who were unwilling to suffer a man of such extraordinary talents to bury himself in seclusion during the most fruitful years of his career. Bossuet and other friends succeeded in persuading him to undertake a new edition of the works of St. Cyprian, and he was preparing for this enterprise when he learned that the work was already in progress elsewhere. Thereupon, at the solicitation of Renaudot, Baluze, and Ruinart, who had endeavored to convince him of the necessity of writing a general history of the Benedictine Order, on the ground that no one had ever been better fitted to undertake such an enterprise, Mabillon yielded to their entreaties and began the work on July 13, 1693. It was an immense task, and demanded unlimited courage and perseverance. He knew that he could not possibly finish the work during his lifetime, but the realization that it would be continued by his faithful confrères when the pen should fall from his hands gave him courage to commence the work.

When Dom Tarrisse and Dom Luc d'Achery, in the early years of the Congregation had sent a request to the superiors of monasteries for the original *acta* of the saints of the Order, they had in mind a work that would lead to a general history of the Order. The *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti*, of which the first volume appeared in 1668, was to be the foundation of this general history; it would contain much of the subject matter for such a production, although much research and coordination still remained to be done.

The composition of the *Annales* compelled Mabillon and Ruinart to undertake several literary journeys; these have been described in previous chapters.¹¹ They visited Alsace and Lorraine in 1696, Touraine and Anjou in 1698, Champagne in 1699, and Normandy in 1700. Towards the end of September, 1701, Mabillon visited the two most celebrated abbeys in France, St. Benedict's at Fleury-sur-Loire, and St. Bernard's in Clairvaux. These journeys, which meant many inconveniences and

¹¹ See chapters V and VI, *supra*.

hardships, were fatiguing to Mabillon, then advanced in years, and when he returned to Paris he became seriously ill. This illness delayed the publication of the first volume until Mabillon had recovered sufficiently to supervise the printing in person. On January 28, 1702, a final appeal was sent to the monasteries of the Order requesting them to send in as soon as possible their documents and memoirs. After a preparation of ten years, the first volume appeared in 1703 with the title, *Annales Ordinis S. Benedicti Occidentalium Monachorum Patriarchae, in quibus non modo res monasticae, sed etiam ecclesiasticae historiae non minima pars continetur*.

The dedicatory epistle to Charles Maurice le Tellier, archbishop of Rheims, dated March, 1703, is followed by a long preface addressed to the abbots, superiors and religious of the Order of St. Benedict.¹² Mabillon tells the purpose of the work and the motives which had prompted him to undertake it, the principal one being the glorification of the Church and the Order. Those who had previously written on the same subject were listed, and given Mabillon's unstinted praise; and those who had in any way contributed to the success of the present work by sending manuscripts and memoirs, were likewise praised. The first book begins by describing the condition of the Church when St. Benedict began his lofty mission. The monasteries then in existence were discussed in detail by Mabillon. In the eighteen books which compose this volume, Mabillon omits nothing of importance or of interest concerning the birth and progress of the Order from the end of the fifth century to the year 700. At the end of the volume is the *Apologia* for the mission of St. Maur in France, written in French by Dom Ruinart, and translated by Mabillon into Latin. This is followed by a dissertation of Mabillon's, proving that Pope St. Gregory the Great had been a Benedictine monk.

The first volume of the *Annales* was received with general satisfaction, and Pope Clement XI wrote to Mabillon, through Cardinal Paulucci, exhorting him to continue a work so important, and also so useful to posterity. Bossuet wrote Mabillon a highly complimentary letter in which he said: "C'est à moi à vous remercier de vos *Annales*, où je trouve dans l'histoire de

¹² Tassin. *Histoire littéraire de la Congrégation de Saint-Maur*, Paris, 1770, pp. 260-267.

votre Ordre ce qu'il y a de plus beau dans celle de l'Église . . . Il falloit un aussi profond savoir et une main aussi adroite que la votre pour faire un aussi bien tissu."¹³

Inspired and encouraged by the reception accorded this first volume of the *Annales*, Mabillon gave all of his time and attention to the preparation of the second volume, which was published the following year, 1704. This volume contains the history of the Benedictine Order from the year 701 to 849, and is divided into fifteen books. Mabillon describes the Order's progress in Germany and the northern countries, where the monks found it necessary to build roads and clear away forests; and in France, where Charlemagne instituted reforms in monasteries wherein the monks had grown lax in observance. In this latter connection Mabillon observes that the fundamentals of the Benedictine spirit are a love of solitude and silence, poverty in worldly goods, modesty in dress and in buildings, submission and obedience of spirit, charity towards all men, whether brother-religious or strangers, earnest application to prayer and the Divine Office, Christian humility and simplicity. If these are neglected, vices and disorders are bound to creep in and destroy observance. Of the task of introducing a reform, Mabillon says: "We know only too well from experience how difficult is this change. That is why those responsible for the introduction of laxity into monasteries should expect a terrible judgment, and this concerns not alone superiors, but also other religious who by their bad example lead others into violations of the Rule."

The third volume of the *Annales* was published in 1706. It begins with the thirty-fourth book and ends with the forty-eighth, containing the history of the second half of the ninth century and the greater part of the tenth century, the years 850 to 980. Mabillon shows how the decadence of the Western Empire and the unworthy occupants of the See of Peter during almost the entire century under discussion changed the complexion of both Church and State. One of the causes of the corrupt state of society during that period, according to Mabillon, was the contempt for study. A century earlier Charlemagne had made efforts to restore the cultivation of learning,

¹³ Bossuet, *Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. of 1819, Versailles. Letters to Mabillon, t. 37, 38, 42.

and had left his empire in a flourishing condition. Alfred, king of the Anglo-Saxons, imitated the methods of Charlemagne, and like him, received the surname "the Great." Mabillon uses this argument to refute critics who contend that study is prejudicial to virtuous living and should for this reason be forbidden to monks. The tenth century, he showed, had not been entirely devoid of men possessing both piety and great learning; for example, St. Odo, abbot of Cluny, established a reform in his monastery which quickly spread over Europe.

The fourth volume of the *Annales*, published in 1707, the year of Mabillon's death, opens with the forty-ninth book and ends with the sixty-second, carrying the history of the Order from 981 to 1066. This period, says Mabillon, is more pleasant to study than the preceding one. Study and piety begin to flourish, and several great popes govern the Church of Rome. Since some of these popes had been taken from Benedictine monasteries, Mabillon describes in detail the part they played in the restoration of ecclesiastical discipline.

While preparing this fourth volume, Mabillon had a keen presentiment of his approaching death. Writing with unusual emotion, he concluded the preface with this profession of faith: "Absit enim ut ab hac regula veritatis, matre inquam Ecclesia, unquam dissentiam, cujus judicio ac censuræ quaecumque hactenus scripsi, vel posthac scripturus sum, lubens, volens, et ex animo submitto; in cujus sinu et fide semper vixi, et constanter, adjuvante Deo, emori exopto." He thus brings to a close with a sincere act of faith the preface of his last published volume.¹⁴ The same year, 1707, on the twenty-seventh of December, Mabillon, the honor of his Order, and the glory of the Church, breathed his last in the abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, where he had labored during forty-three years. His last efforts were devoted to the preparation of the *Annales*, of which he had been able to publish four volumes in the course of five years, following a preparation begun in 1693. Two volumes, published after his death, over a space of thirty-two years, were composed almost exclusively of materials gathered by him. "Mabillon never appeared so modest, nor so attached to the Church," said the Jesuit publication, the *Journal de Trévoux*, "as in the last

¹⁴ Lecomte, in *Archives de la France Monastique*, Vol. 5, p. 255.

work he had printed, the fourth volume of the Benedictine *Annales*.¹⁵

After Mabillon's death, his faithful co-laborer, Dom Ruinart, was charged with the continuation of all his unfinished enterprises. Ruinart applied himself to the *Annales*, and had enjoyed considerable success when, on September 29, 1709, he died prematurely in the abbey of Hautvilliers. The superior of the Congregation appointed Dom René Massuet, at the time forty-three years of age, and professor of theology in the abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, to succeed Ruinart. Massuet felt some repugnance at undertaking a work with which he was unfamiliar, but submitted to the task with religious obedience. For six years he labored continually, but his strong constitution broke under the strain, and he died on January 16, 1716, without completing the sixth volume of the *Annales*. He had succeeded in publishing the fifth volume in 1713, which carried the history of the Order from 1067 to 1116. In this volume, Mabillon, who was the author of most of the material in it, seemed to have enlarged his scope to a general history rather than a history of the Benedictine monasteries which he had given in the preceding volumes. The preface of this fifth volume and a long treatise on the lives of Mabillon and Ruinart are the work of Dom Massuet.

The materials for the sixth volume of the *Annales* were left incomplete by Mabillon, and demanded much more preparation and research than the fifth volume, which he had left practically ready for the press. After the death of Dom Massuet, several religious were successively appointed to carry on the work: Dom François Tixier, who was relieved of the task in 1717; Dom Vincent Thuillier, who was occupied with other works and could give only his leisure moments to the *Annales*. At the death of Thuillier in 1736, Dom Edmond Martène, the celebrated author of the *Thesaurus novus anecdotorum*, the *Amplissima Collectio* and the *De Antiquis Ecclesiae Ritibus* pleaded with the vicar-general of the Congregation to be appointed to the task of completing the *Annales*. The unfinished sixth volume was entrusted to him, and after three years of arduous labor he had it ready for the press. He did not have the satisfaction

¹⁵ *Journal de Trévoux*, 1703, p. 1003.

of seeing it in the hands of the general public, for he died on June 20, 1739, while the volume was in the press.

This sixth volume of the *Annales* begins with the seventy-third book and ends with the eightieth, the history of the Order from 1117 to 1157. In his preface, Dom Martène indicated the work of Mabillon, Ruinart, and Massuet in preparing the sixth volume. The publication of this tome concluded Mabillon's last work, his final testament to posterity. Critics have proclaimed it in every way worthy of the monumental works which preceded it, the *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti*, the *De Re Diplomatica*, and the *Vetera Analecta*. The *Annales* will remain the glory of Mabillon, a work performed when he had reached the apogee of his talent and achievement. It was indeed fitting that it should be what he himself called it, "ultimum hoc vigiliarum mearum opus."

CONCLUSION

Soon after the publication of the fourth volume of the *Annales*, Mabillon left St. Germain-des-Prés on December 1, 1707, to attend a ceremony of profession in the abbey of Chelles, near Paris. He had not progressed as far as Vincennes, on the road to Chelles, when he was suddenly taken ill, being compelled to leave the carriage in which he had been riding and continue the journey on foot. Only with the greatest difficulty did he finally reach Chelles, where his condition became so serious that a hurried summons was sent to Dom Ruinart in Paris. When the latter arrived, he saw that if Mabillon's life was to be saved, he must be removed at once to Paris to receive proper medical attention. The removal was accomplished with the generous assistance of Cardinal d'Estrées, French Ambassador to Rome, who sent his carriage to Chelles for the purpose. By the time he had reached Paris, Mabillon's sufferings had become so intense that, in spite of the valiant efforts of the doctors and surgeons attending him, all hope of saving his life was abandoned.

Mabillon's last days were spent in an agony of pain which lasted over three weeks, but he bore his sufferings with that uncomplaining patience and resignation which had characterized his whole life. When the report of Mabillon's condition reached Versailles, Louis XIV was informed that he was about to lose the most learned man in the kingdom. "It must be Père Mabillon," Louis replied, without hesitation. When an attendant at the suffering man's bedside spoke of the inestimable services Mabillon had rendered to his Order and to the Church, Mabillon quickly responded, "Do not speak of that; humility! humility! humility!" They were the last words he uttered. On December 27, 1707, the feast of his patron, St. John the Evangelist, Mabillon breathed his last while the monks at his bedside were reciting the canticle *Benedicite*.¹

¹ In a letter to Dom Martène, Jan. 9, 1708, Dom Coustant describes at length the fatal attack and last moments of Mabillon. Cf. Jadart, in *Travaux de l'Académie de Reims*, Vol. 64, pp. 305-306. See Appendix I.

When Pope Clement XI learned of Mabillon's death, he ordered Cardinal Colloredo to write to the superiors of St. Germain-des-Prés, recommending some distinctive resting place for the body of their most distinguished member. "Strangers and men of letters will come in great numbers to Paris"; said the Pontiff, "If his ashes are mixed with those of other bodies, and visitors shall ask, 'where did you lay him'—*ubi posuistis eum?*—what answer will you be able to make?" It had been the unvaried custom of the Congregation to give no distinctive marks to the tombs of its various religious; the most illustrious as well as the least known were buried without names on the tombs that enclosed them. Mabillon's remains had already been placed in the chapel of Our Lady in the abbey of St. Germain-des-Prés, and in order to conform to the wishes of the Holy Father, the name of the illustrious historian was added to the marble slab on which only the date of the death was ordinarily marked. The slab covering Mabillon's grave bore the inscription *Hic jacet R. P. D. Joannes Mabillon, Obiit 27 Decembris 1707.*

When the Revolution swept over France at the end of the eighteenth century, Mabillon's remains were more fortunate than those of the King. In 1799 the Chapel of Our Lady was to be razed to permit a street to be cut through, and when the plan became known, a distinguished scholar, the Abbé Bouillon, petitioned the government for permission to exhume the remains of Mabillon. The request was granted, and the body was removed to the Museum of French Monuments which had been established by Alexander Lenoir in the convent of the Augustinians in Paris. Twenty years later, when the Museum of French Monuments became the Ecole des Beaux Arts, the remains of Mabillon were again exhumed and returned to the abbey of St. Germain-des-Prés, where they rest today in one of the side chapels.

Mabillon's position among his contemporaries can best be seen from a study of the vast correspondence which he conducted with scholars in almost every country. His letters form eleven folio volumes in the Bibliothèque Nationale, and these are only a portion of what was collected. Many letters were destroyed in the fire which swept St. Germain-des-Prés in 1794, and some of those which were saved still bear traces of the fire. In 1846 three volumes of letters were published by Valéry under the title

Correspondance inédite de Mabillon et de Montfaucon avec l'Italie. How it was possible for a man engaged continually on vast literary and historical enterprises to conduct the extensive correspondence that Mabillon did, is a fact which perhaps only the regularity of the religious life can explain. Mabillon was everywhere regarded as one of the most learned men of his century, and scholars were continually consulting him about obscure points in their researches, and submitting their works to him before publication, to secure his advice and suggestions. Many noted scholars of England, particularly among the Oxford professors, were among the regular correspondents of Mabillon: Bernard, professor of astronomy, Madox, the "father of English erudition," Ernest Grabe, Thomas Milles, Henry Smith. The historian Gale penned this tribute to Mabillon: "I offer you in this letter, you who are the adornment of our century, an example of the historians of Oxford, and I pray you to accept it as a proof of my gratitude."

What was true of the scholars of England was no less true of those on the Continent. The celebrated German philosopher, Leibnitz, was among those who corresponded frequently with Mabillon. The two exchanged books and notes, and discussed numerous problems of contemporary interest. Among the members of the Roman Curia, Cardinals Bona, Casanata, Barbarigo, Colloredo, and d'Aguirre wrote continually to Mabillon. When Cardinal Ottoboni was elected Pope under the name of Alexander VIII in 1689, he sent word to Mabillon to write to him every week.

Scholars and literary men were not the only ones who paid their tribute of homage and respect to Mabillon. In 1701 King Louis XIV wished to express in some public act the admiration and esteem entertained by France for one of the most learned men in the Kingdom, and named Mabillon an honorary member of the Royal Academy of Inscriptions and Medals, which had been formed by Colbert, in 1663, for the purpose of designing the inscriptions to be placed on medals struck in honor of the principal events of the reign of Louis XIV. In 1716 the Academy received the additional title "of Belles-Lettres." When Mabillon was appointed to it, in 1701, it comprised forty members, divided into four groups, of ten honorary members, ten pensioners, ten associates, and ten scholars. Mabillon was officially

notified of his appointment in a letter from the secretary of state, de Pontchartrain, July 15, 1701: "Your great reputation has moved the King to choose you as one of the honorary academicians of the Royal Academy of Inscriptions. His majesty does not doubt that you will distinguish yourself in this field as you have done in all the other sciences which you possess in so eminent a degree."²

At one of the first sessions of the Academy following his nomination, Mabillon read a scholarly dissertation on the ancient burial places of the French kings.³ His associates in the Academy accorded him all the honor and respect due to one of his widespread reputation. The Secretary of the Academy, M. de Boze, in the customary eulogy delivered shortly after the death of Mabillon said: "No one was more devoted to the glory of the Society than he. His presence inspired in the other members a noble emulation, and all kept their eyes fixed on this simple man who never raised his own."⁴

That Mabillon's memory is still cherished, and his authority as an historian still respected by scholars of the present century was evidenced by the acclaim accorded the second centenary of his death in 1907. The principal celebration was held in the ancient abbatial church of St. Germain-des-Prés, the scene of

² Mabillon's reply evinces once more his sincere humility: "Monseigneur, j'ai reçu avec un très profond respect l'honneur qu'il a plu à Sa Majesté de me faire, en me mettant au nombre des académiciens honoraires. J'avoue que j'ai été surpris qu'un si grand roi ait daigné jeter les yeux sur une personne obscure telle que je suis, et qu'il ait eu la bonté de me donner place dans un compagnie si illustre. Heureux si je pouvais correspondre en quelque façon aux glorieux desseins de Sa Majesté: mais je sens qu'il me sera bien plus facile de profiter de lumières de tant d'illustres académiciens que de présumer de pouvoir leur en donner de nouvelles. Je ferai néanmoins mon possible pour n'être pas tout-à-fait indigne de cet honneur. Je vous rends de très humbles actions de grâces, Monseigneur, de ce que Votre Grandeur a bien voulu m'en faire expédier les lettres: je les conserverai précieusement comme un illustre moment de la bonté d'un si grand roi, à l'égard d'un de ses très obéissants sujets, et comme des arrhes, si je l'ose dire, de votre protection, que je prie Votre Grandeur de vouloir bien m'accorder. Je sais ce que je dois en tout ceci à M. l'abbé Bignon, et j'espère qu'il me fera la grâce de me présenter à Votre Grandeur pour vous témoigner mes très humbles et très sincères remerciemens." Cited by Chavin de Malan, *Histoire de Mabillon*, Paris, 1843, p. 385.

³ "Les anciennes sepultures de nos Rois," printed in the *Oeuvres Posthumes de Mabillon et Ruinart*, Paris, 1724, Vol. II, p. 43-58.

⁴ A. Boislisle, "Dom Jean Mabillon et l'Académie des Inscriptions," in *Archives de la France Monastique*, Vol. V (1908).

Mabillon's labors, on December 27, 1907. The ceremony was presided over by Msgr. Amette, then coadjutor bishop of Paris. Mass was celebrated by Abbé Theodenat, a member of the *Institut*, and the eulogy delivered by Dom Cabrol, abbot of Farnborough. Scholars from many countries were present to pay their respects to the memory of the celebrated Maurist, and the leading organs of the Parisian press carried special feature articles in honor of the occasion, such as the *Gazette de France*, December 22 and 28, 1907, with articles by Dom Besse and Jean Ligure; the *Gaulois*, December 28, an article by Georges Goyau, the *Journal des Débats*, December 28, an article by M. Dupont-Ferrier; M. J. Chavonon in *La Croix*, Arthur Loth in *Univers*, M. Montorgeuil in *l'Eclair*, M. de Narfon in *Le Figaro*. In the periodicals of the day, P. Boize contributed to *Les Études Religieuses* for January 5, 1908; the *Correspondent* for January 25, 1908, and the *Semaine Religieuse* of Amiens for January and February carried several articles. On February 14, 1908, the *Institut Catholique* of Paris joined in the numerous celebrations being held in honor of Mabillon. In the spacious hall on the Rue d'Assas, Dom Besse delivered a special conference on Mabillon, in the presence of such scholars as M. Leopold Delisle, Msgr. Alfred Baudrillart, M. Fagniez, and many others. The conference was presided over by the venerable scholar M. de Boislisle, who died only a few weeks later. In connection with the second centenary celebration, the Benedictines of Ligugé published a volume of learned articles on various phases of Mabillon's career, written by representative scholars. It is entitled *Mélanges et documents publiés à l'occasion du deuxième centenaire de la mort de Mabillon*, and comprises the fifth volume of the *Archives de la France Monastique*.⁵

Mabillon belongs properly, as Lord Acton says,⁶ to the family of pioneers, and his name is one of the greatest and best known in the line of discoverers from Valla and Sigonius to Borghesi and Morgan, who have made history a science. To understand and appreciate adequately Mabillon's distinctive contribution to historical science, it is necessary to keep in mind the fact that he was primarily a monk, a member of a Congregation which

⁵ Cf. *Revue Mabillon*, Vol. IV (1908), May.

⁶ Acton, "Mabillon" in *English Historical Review*, Vol. III, p. 585 ss.

took upon itself the task of investigating into the past ages of mankind in a diligent search for truth. Mabillon formed a part of this army of simple providers of raw material, who placed texts above facts, and facts above thoughts. He covered a small section of a very large field, and left much for later investigation. What he did accomplish during his long life was to pass from fiction to reality in history, but not from system to science. With the developments and improvements in historical method achieved by succeeding generations of scholars, Mabillon has been left behind, but it was his method that made possible this advance, a fact which merits for him today more than two centuries after his death, a prominent place among the founders of modern historical criticism.

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APPENDIX

I

A letter from Dom Coustant to Dom Martène explaining the circumstances of Mabillon's death:

Le 9 Janvier 1708.

Mon Révérend Père,

Vous me demandez quelques circonstances de la mort de D. J. Mabillon. J'espère que vous les pourrez mieux apprendre d'ailleurs. Cependant je puis assurer qu'elle a parfaitement répondu au reste de sa vie, et que si sa perte a été affligeante, la manière dont il est mort n'a pas été d'une petite consolation pour ceux qui l'aimoient d'un amour chrétien. L'on a sujet d'adorer les jugemens de Dieu, qui semble en avoir voulu faire un martyr.

Il a permis que le Père assistant le prist le premier de décembre pour assister à quelques professions qui se devoient faire le même jour à Chelles, et que D. Thiéri, qui ne le quittoit pas, et qui apparemment auroit détourné le coup fatal, ne put être de la compagnie. Dès Paris, le carrosse s'arrêta deux fois, et en ces deux rencontres D. Jean éprouva qu'il étoit attaqué d'une retention d'urine. Au bois de Vincennes, il fut obligé de descendre de carrosse; et au lieu de retourner à Paris, il poussa à pied vers Chelles, s'étant présente près de deux cents fois sans pouvoir se décharger. Il tomba ensuite entre les mains d'un médecin de Lagni, qui ne connut point son mal, en sorte que l'on ne commença à le soulager par la sonde que le jour de la Conception, c'est-à-dire le 8 jour de son mal, où ensuite on le ramena à Paris. Le chirurgien et le médecin dirent des lors qu'il falloit qu'il eut souffert des douleurs très-vives et très-aigues; et depuis il n'a rendu aucune eau que par la sonde. Il dit à D. Thiéri, qui l'alla trouver à Chelles dès le 2 jour de sa maladie: "Cher ami, il faut nous séparer: comme je suis le plus âgé; il est juste que je commence le premier." La fièvre étant survenue deux jours avant la Saint-Thomas, il demanda les derniers sacremens, quoiqu'il ne parut pas que rien pressât.

Ce fut pourtant un effet de la Providence, parce que la violence des frissons qu'il ressentit la nuit suivante auroit embarrassé si l'on n'eut pris cette précaution. J'ay été temoins comme il adoucissoit ses douleurs par la ferveur de ses prières, tantôt

demandant à Dieu la patience, tantot le benissant; toujours le coeur élevé vers lui et ne pensant qu'à finir saintement. Il communia la nuit de Noel, et parut se porter mieux; mais après midi on s'aperçut qu'il crachoit le sang, et pour lors il fut désespéré. Le jour de Saint-Estienne, il cessa de cracher et on lui ôta la sonde pour le laisser passer plus doucement. On n'attendoit que l'heure de sa morte; mais il dit qu'il célébreroit la fête de Saint Jean. Il demanda la sonde pour un peu se soulager, et ce ne fut que pour appesantir sa croix; car le chirurgien n'en put venir à bout, et par ses efforts ne fit qu'une excoriation dont il sortit une demi-écuellée de sang.

Comme on tâchoit sur le soir de l'entretenir dans les bons sentimens dont il étoit rempli, son feu s'augmenta; il se mit à parler d'une manière ravissante de la grandeur de Dieu, de l'intégrité du sacrifice qui lui est dû, etc.; en sorte que l'on crut devoir le communier incontinent après minuit. D. Claude Guénie lui dit la messe, et D. Jean, tout agonisant qu'il étoit, la dit avec lui en suivant et disant toutes les paroles, puis communia avec sentiments très-vifs; et depuis ne cessa point de répéter le cantique "Benedicite," jusqu'à ce que la parole lui eut entièrement manqué, c'est-à-dire environ deux heurs avant sa mort, qui arriva le jour de Saint-Jean à quatre heures trois quarts du soir.

M. de Harlay, le premier président, marqua par une lettre le lendemain, combien il étoit sensible à la perte que faisoit la France, dont "notre Père étoit, dit il, depuis longtemps un des principaux ornemens," et à celle de notre très-sainte congrégation, pour me servir de ses termes, qu'il honoroit, et où il édifioit ses confrères par sa vie régulière. Je suis ajouter que plus il avançoit, plus il se préparoit à la mort. Il n'avoit pourtant rien de vieil: sa vue étoit la même que quand vous l'avez vu; et même après sa mort, lui ayant ouvert les yeux pour le tirer, il en sortoit encore un feu surprenant. L'on donne ces deux vers comme de M. de la Monnoie:

Ille Mabillonius jacet hic, qui vivere plura
Quam scripsit Patrum saecula dignus erat.

Ce qui a donné lieu à un de nos confrères d'ajouter:
Non terris natus, sed coelo, aeterna petivit
Saecula, scribendo quae meditatus erat.

Fr. P. Coustant.

(Cited by Jadart, *Travaux de l'Académie Imperiale de Reims*, Vol. LXIV, pp. 305-306.)

II

The following profession of faith was enunciated by Mabillon in reply to Dom Bastide's criticism of the *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis S. Benedicti*:

Ut aequitatis amor prima judicis dos est, sic et rerum ante actarum sincera et accurata investigatio historici munus esse debet. Judex persona publica est, ad suum cuique tribuendum constituta; ejus judicio stant omnes in rebus de quibus fert sententiam; maximi proinde criminis reum se facit, si pro virili sua parte jus suum unicuique non reddat. Idem historici munus est, qui et ipse persona publica est, cujus fidei committitur examen rerum ab antiquis gestarum. Cum enim omnibus non liceat eas per se investigare, sententiam ejus sequuntur plerique; quos proinde fallit, nisi aequam ferre conetur, nec satis est tamen verum ut amet et investiget, nisi is insit animi candor quo ingenue et aperte dicat quod verum esse novit. Mentiri, si christianis omnibus, multo magis religiosasam vitam professis nulla unquam ratione licet, longeque minus cum mendacium multis exitiale est, ac perniciosum. Fieri vero non potest quin historici mendacia vertant in perniciem multorum, qui verbis ejus fidem adhibentes decipiuntur, dum errorem pro veritate amplectuntur; non levis proinde ejus culpa fuerit, qui tot alios secum in errorem trahit. Debet ergo, si candidus sit, procul ab omni studio partium, certa ut certa, falsa ut falsa, dubia ut dubia tradere; neque dissimulare quae utrique parti favere aut adversari possunt. Non debet a veritate sejungi pietas; neque haec, si vera ac sincera sit, veritati unquam adversari.

Inique igitur agerem, si falsa ut vera, dubia ut certa proponerem Ordinis decora; siquidem id repugnat veritati, cujus partes monachi, utpote Christi, qui veritas est, sectatores, sequi debent: tum religiosae sinceritati, quam a nobis potissimum requirunt viri saeculares, cum humilitati ac modestiae, qua viros maxime decet religiosos. Neque enim nisi fovendae vanitati conferre potest alienae virtutis aut mutualis splendoris ostentatio, tum denique quia id Ordini nocet quam plurimum, pessimamque de illo ingerit adversariis opinionem; nihil enim aequae de historici fide detrahit, ac si vera pro falsis, aut saltem incerta pro certis, nimio partium studio afferantur, ubi quippe vel semel veritati defuisse quis convincitur, inde certa quaeque rejiciendi, aut saltem de illis suspicandi adversariis ansam praebet.

(Cited by Delisle in the *Archives de la France Monastique*, Vol. V (1908), pp. 93-94.)

VITA

Joseph Urban Bergkamp was born in Bayonne, N. J., October 10, 1900. He received his elementary education in All Saints' and St. Paul's Schools, Jersey City, and made his classical course in St. Peter's College, Jersey City. In 1920 he entered the Order of Preachers, at St. Joseph's Convent, Somerset, Ohio. At the completion of his year's novitiate, he went to St. Rose Convent, Springfield, Kentucky, for his first year of philosophy. In 1922 he was assigned to the Dominican House of Studies, Washington, D. C., for the completion of his philosophical and theological studies. In 1923 he began the following course of studies at the Catholic University of America: *Medieval Institutions*, under Rev. Peter Guilday, Ph.D.; *American Political History*, under Charles H. McCarthy, Ph.D.; *English and American Literature*, under Arthur Deering, M.A.; and *American Government*, under Richard J. Purcell, Ph.D. In June, 1925, he obtained the degree of Master of Arts.